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THE BETTER SELF.

By the same Author.

THE GENTLE LIFE.

1st Series, 21st Edition ; 2nd Series, 6th Edition.

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BETTER SELF:

ESSAYS FOR HOME-LIFE.

BY

J. HAIN FRISWELL,

AUTHOR OF "THE GENTLE LIFE."

The State, or Individual [or WRITER], thrives the best who dives deepest down into the masses of the people, and adapts itself to the wants of the greatest number.—W. E. GLADSTONE.

That which is nearest us touches us most. The passions rise higher at domestic than at Imperial tragedies.—SAMUEL JOHNSON.

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THIS VOLUME
IS WITH GREAT RESPECT AND BY PERMISSION
DEDICATED TO
THE BARONESS BURDETT-COUTTS,
WHOSE CONSTANT AIM
HAS BEEN TO HELP OTHERS TO ATTAIN
A BETTER SELF.

P R E F A C E.



THIS book by no means concerns the best self, or the highest ideal, but simply a move upwards towards something a little higher than the dead flat upon which we have, of late, settled. [To those who live noble and high lives even in imagination, which is by far the most trodden path, the essays in this volume will seem but tame and homely. Is this, they will ask—this life of ordinary courtesy, simple and pure affection, and humdrum honesty—the better life? The answer is, Yes, it is;] because pretence, sham, and disguise are as rife now as in the days when the Voice cried in the wilderness and pointed out the straight path, which was, even to the soldier—not desertion of his work nor brand-new

heroism—but simple duty to oppress no one, and “to be content with his pay.” That was the better life to him.

It would be easier to advise higher things. In all things pretence and swagger predominate to-day ; in few matters more than in literature, and in religious, and so-called pious, literature especially. The self-sacrificing but coldly unnatural person of the tracts, the very best of them, translated into the ordinary cold-hearted religionist, who always looks after his own comfort, and whose words are fire while his deeds are ice, has done more harm to the faith than thousands of opponents. There are not two or three, but dozens of so-called Christian publications, that never speak soul to soul, and that young men look at with a sickening, and good men with a mournful sinking sensation of the mental stomach, which proves at once that that unerring guide, the conscience, has found them out to be—cant. Nor are they alone. This exaggerative assumption—this adulteration of the milk of human kindness by something which will atone for its miserable dilution by a rich smack—this silk surface

to the cotton dress pervades all literature ; criticism of art, and that which touches the highest things especially. Something of the rejective sickness spoken of may certainly be felt when we read an article in an æsthetic review, by Brown-Brown on the picture or poem of Smith-Smith who is of his own school. Mild indeed is this phrase if we recall the bare and bald indecencies of the slums—I speak with no exaggeration—and the nastinesses of foul-mouthed vulgar boys so freely used in a halting prose by an American poet, which has been praised as the high fruit of genius, and the soul music of the future.

But we taste nothing pure. The great dread of the present age is adulteration. There is no man who can assure you that the cod-liver oil or quinine on which the life of his dearest one may depend is genuine and without admixture ; the high passion of the poet is simulated ; we strut where we should walk, and talk goody rather than are good. Hence the present volume may seem to have taken a quiet and lowly tone indeed when it rehearses to those who are so pure on the platform, and so hard at

home or in business, the few simple graceful realities which form the better self.

It may be necessary to add, that owing to a long and constant illness, which has rendered daily work always irksome and sometimes impossible, this work has been a long time on hand, as some of the Essays will bear witness. Its name was to have been "The Higher Life," but as that title was subsequently appropriated by another writer—the Rev. Baldwin Brown—the present one has been adopted, and, consequently, a more subdued tone has been taken throughout the volumes.

FAIR HOME,

Bexley, January, 1875.

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THE BETTER SELF.



I.

BEGINNING AT HOME.

WHERE better to begin? We are in “a parlous state, shepherd!” as Touchstone tells the simple William in the forest, and the nations around are perhaps not better than we. The best men amongst us have seen this.

“We are a people drowned in hypocrisy, saturated with it to the bone. Alas! it is even so, in spite of far other intentions at one time, and of a languid, dumb, but *ineradicable inward protest against it still*: and we are beginning to be universally conscious of that horrible condition, and by no means disposed to die in behalf of continuing it! It has lasted long, that unblessed process; process of ‘lying to sleep in the Devil’s Pickle’ for above two hundred years (I date the formal beginning of it from the year 1660, and desperate *return* of Sacred Majesty, after such an

ousting as it had got) ; process which appears to be now about complete."

Thus far outspoken Carlyle. You will not find that the newspapers generally tell you this, those especially with the largest circulation in the world—those with sparkling leaders, making all comfortable, and urging that it is well with us—speaking peace, look you, where there is no peace. "Hypocrisy !" they would cry ; "why, there is no such good honest fellow in the world as John Bull !" Meantime, how goes it ? "Fifty years ago," said a friend to Carlyle, "in the middle of Germany when you were going to a shop to purchase, wise people would advise you : 'If you can find an English article, buy that ; it will be a few pence dearer, but it will prove itself a well-made, faithful, and skilful thing—a comfortable servant and friend to you for a long time—*better buy THAT.*' And *now* directly the reverse advice is given : 'If you find an English article, don't buy that ; that will be a few pence cheaper, but it will prove only a more cunningly devised piece of mendacity than any of the others—*avoid that above ALL.*' " *

Both of these pieces of advice are good and true. Here is the advertising dodge result—the largest box of matches,

* In justice to our country one must say that much of the obloquy on English goods is gained through forgeries of English trade marks, and that where a fair price is paid, true English work is always, in spite of grumblers, soundly good.

that will not light ; the biggest knife, that will not cut ; the cheapest axe, that flies in splinters, and cuts your leg instead of the tree ; the largest, most illustrated, and worst weekly periodical, that does not contain one wholesome thought in it ; the cheapest pound of soap, that will not cleanse ; and sugar sold at no profit except on the sand mixed with it, and the paper that wraps it, thick and heavy, bought at a penny a pound and retailed at fourpence, and always weighed with it. No wonder that when people practise wholesale cheating we are all awake to the “dodges” of trade. Each knows his own weakness ; each is therefore—as we universally judge others by ourselves—painfully alive to universal hypocrisy. Not cheapest, but best, should be the tradesman’s motto. There is such security, such happiness, such bravery in doing a good thing and selling a good thing. A good tradesman is a noble man if he gives good measure, sells sound articles, and does his duty. He is a wise man, too.

And now, how to get rid of Carlyle’s accusation, which is felt by all of us to be too true ? There is but one answer—begin at home. Let us each make our homes true, take a true view of life, ensure truth always and everywhere, pull off the phantom sham ; rise, be men, be proud of being working men, shopkeepers, poor parsons, writers, tradesmen, or lawyers, so that we do our best and follow out—shrinkingly enough, perhaps, at first—what we know to be true.

An evening paper has lately been sneering at the education of working men, "our future masters." But surely they are educated—educated enough to know the false from the true, the humbug from the honest man; they have a heart and conscience within them; and, appealed to generously, trusted without suspicion, they will not fail us. But they and the middle classes are getting wrong views of life in the hurry of the world, and the general worship of riches, and the race to make fortunes. Yet, the universal testimony of rich men is, that the fortunes themselves are not worth having; that moderate occupation is the best and the happiest existence; while rich and poor, wise and simple, all men who have ever lived, so that they are honest, will tell you that the real satisfaction worth having, unsurpassed, not to be taken away in this world, and to be well rewarded in the next, is to do your duty. Who in the lower class beats his wife, terrifies his children, shames his neighbourhood, but the poor lazy wretch who has not done his duty, and, angry with himself, in some devil's fashion of *quid pro quo*, avenges his self-inflicted unhappiness on others? Who comes home smiling, stays at home, does all the good he can, and makes the place around him happy, but the man who has done his duty, and who feels satisfied with himself? That's the man of whom England is proud. That's the man who does not rail against the rich, nor scold the aristocracy, nor bellow down the Lords, because he knows that he is

as good a Lord as any of them. He is the sort of man who

“ Would shake hands with the king upon his throne,
And think it honour to his Majesty ! ”

And that is the man who would quietly require the king to do his duty if need came, and would look that it were done, too. He is the true Conservative who keeps up his own worth, and adds materially to the dignity of the nation. That man gets his strength from home ; it is what we do there that concerns us most ; it is there that the virtues are nursed, and the heart, at peace with itself, turns, as the flower does to the sun, to the God of peace, and gains from Him light and strength. Let us all be wisely selfish in keeping up home and the home affections.

And, first, to the head of the house, the house-band of our good old English and much-meaning tongue ; it is well that he should be revered, with love. Foolish fathers who vacate their dignities do not have hopeful sons. Don't believe either in silly talking or viciously speaking fathers, nor in those whose love never shines forth in pleasant smiles. Napoleon loved the man who held with a steel hand, covered with a silk glove ; so should the father be gentle, but firm. Of the mother in a house, it is difficult to speak otherwise than of one worthy of the very highest and noblest esteem and affection. The father should always pay a courtly deference to her, and his children will take

their cue from him. This when the mother is a true one, a far more usual case than the cheap wits whose cue it is to laugh at commonplace virtues will allow. When the father shows he respects and loves his wife, the children, too, love and respect her. People may talk as much as they like about new forms of female industry, and new branches of trade, to give them an equal chance with man; but the universal desire and instinct shown by woman towards marriage—much more so than by man—indicates that the true province of woman is to be at home, the queen of the home. The throne may be a poor one; blankest poverty may surround it, long struggles may have made it sad, fortune may never have smiled upon it; but when a woman has a husband's love, when her children can and do arise and call her blessed, then it is a throne indeed.

And for children. It will be an apocalypse to some to insist that, under any faith or philosophy, to have, bring up, and well educate children, is the chief end of life, which, look you, is not man-ruling, teaching, preaching, governing; still less is it man-killing, drilling, and marching; nor is it skating, dancing, billiard-playing, and bird-shooting wholly; nor is it only a trading, cheating, and money-getting affair, but to produce fine, well-limbed, well-minded, sound-hearted boys and girls, and thence men and women. Well, as far as we can judge, the great Creator desires souls purified by earthly trials, and we opine that those who present a long list of

such jewels to the King of kings, will have done notable work.

Now-a-days people tell us that their children are held to be impoverishing, and somewhat of a bore. "We push them," say they, "a great deal too much off to school masters;" and we think that what they say is true. "What is the cause of this?" asks a friend. "I am afraid that, if we visit our neighbours, and ask the reason, we shall find that the parents do not consider it their duty to attend to their own children." They fancy that if they send their children to the Sunday school, and there let them be instructed in some way as to their religion by the parson, and by the school-master as to manners and letters, all will be well; and this lapse of duty on the parent's part makes the widening rent between parent and child still wider. (The people in the United States and Australia are worse off than we are here. Young men of forty in America and the English colonies are called by their own lanky sons of fifteen "darned old forriners." The young men soon feel themselves to be of value there, and throw off parental authority. But here, also, where the parents toil far into middle life for the benefit of their children, the case is no better. Every day the boys and girls are increasing in forwardness, boldness, rudeness and impudence. We don't say this merely to find fault with the children themselves; *they* know no better. Boys and girls will ape and imitate men and women, if they are not

taught to be children. The manners of men and women, and the older fashions of speaking and acting which are well enough in a man, look impudent, and are impudent, in a boy, where bashfulness and modesty should be conspicuous. In all our great towns there are to be seen troops of young boys and girls walking out, the boys following the girls, chaffing, courting, quizzing, and indulging in worse courses, at an age whereat their fathers and mothers were, and their contemporaries and age-fellows of the better classes are, scarcely out from the nursery.

Over fondness, insufficient authority, a fear of slapping a child, or of using the rod early in life, whereby parents are prevented from using it late, and a spendthrift anticipation by the children of the pleasures of youth before they are youths, have produced these results :—

(1.) After some years of boredom, the father and mother are so bothered with their children that they want to get rid of them. (2.) The children, not feeling the proper respect for their parents, do not show it. (3.) A division exists in the home, and universally, children, instead of being held to be one of God's greatest blessings, are considered a misfortune. "Ah, poor man! he has so many children to bring up," &c. The home then becomes not a home, but merely a dull, cheerless place to sleep in, to rest at night in—no more.

"I wish," says one of the victims to a rather different

but analogous state of things to that above described, "that Preachers and Teachers generally would imbue parents with a sense of the duty of making home *more cheerful*." Our friend then gives an account of his own experience, to show us what kind of reform is necessary for parents to make their homes "more lively and encouraging, so as to keep their children from seeking pleasure and excitement elsewhere." He draws a picture of a severe religious man of fifty, a good firm man, no doubt, but one in whom the principle of love is left out; a Dissenter and a teetotalter, severely so as to both; no argument is started but the father overbearingly puts it down; the very mention of drink "rouses his arguing power, and he becomes offensive." He hates little indulgences. Any novels, any dramatic readings or entertainments are bad; to enter a theatre or a music-hall would be perdition. If bagatelle or cards were introduced they would be thrown out of the window; a draught, chess, or domino board is equally hated, and of course banished. In fact, this "powerful" example of ours has just rubbed the bloom off the plums, and plucked up the flowers of life. The children are good and industrious, but feel home to be a prison. To get to the City at nine, to leave at seven, to have tea, then to read a religious book, for the most part stupidly written, seems to be the fate of the young men of such families. Music is a frivolity, and although there are two withdrawing-rooms and a piano, the rooms are empty

during the week days, and none of the graces of life are allowed to flourish. On Sundays, of course, there is harder work, hearing sermons and reading tracts ; and on Monday the dull, sad week begins again.

This picture is from life : what shall we say of it ? Why, that our severe man of fifty goes the right way to bring up hypocrites. "On the sly," the young men smoke ; on the sly, they run into music-halls ; on the sly, they do worse things. 'Tis no new thing. The old proverb says that "Clergymen's sons always turn out badly." Why ? Because the children are brought up surfeited with severe religion—*not* with the gentle, true religion of Christ, who was himself reproved by the prototypes of such severe men. In one of Crabbe's tales, wherein he begins quaintly—

"Grave Jonas Kindred, Sybil Kindred's sire,
Was six feet high, and look'd six inches higher,"

that great painter of Nature shows how the sternness of the father nearly spoils the child. 'Tis an old, old story ; not bad nature, but bad taste made it severe. Not always do such foolish severities end with the tragedies of crime or death. Bitter the reflection then, if the father has reflection. Over the dead Absalom—a fair, beautiful body whence the soul has fled, a casket whence the precious jewel is stolen—you may cry for ever, "Oh Absalom, my son, my son !"—to this earth he never can come back. But say the son does

not die, that his life remains, from how many is the priceless jewel of life, purity, honour, honesty, stolen by those into whose arms the cheerless home has driven them !

In a land which we are so fond of describing as being filled with Homes, and as being especially the most home-loving in the world, is it not useless to cry, "Behold how good and how pleasant a thing it is to dwell together in unity !" The sister will be loved, honoured, and cherished ; the father, having sacrificed himself for the children in giving them his time, his love, his money, will find them ready to lay down their lives for his. Was there ever a more tender story than that of the Scottish henchman who went into battle with seven tall sons, and who placed one after another before his chief to shield him, and shouted out, as each fell, "another for Hector," till the whole seven died at the behest of the loyal old man ? Were they taught to shun home as a sham, or a prison, or as something unpleasant ? Did they not rather love it, though rough and rude as Lord Lovat's barbarous hold, as the abode of truth and love, kindness, openness, and honesty, where smiles were plentiful, and tears were wiped away, and hearts were strengthened, and father, mother, brothers, and sisters, formed a sheaf of arrows, which, when bound together, could not be injured by a giant, but if single could be broken by a child !

II.

THE VERY YOUNG CHILDREN.

IN his amusing volumes, "From Waterloo to the Peninsula," in which with infinite spirit, curious learning, and a fidelity which is almost photographic and completely marvellous, the traveller puts before us all that he has seen; the author gives us a picture of an orange tree blossoming in the neighbourhood of the Escorial which we shall quote. And when we say that the traveller shows us "all that he has seen," we must accord to him the rarest faculty of observation, and the capacity of picking up more in ten minutes than an ordinary traveller would in ten days. Each of us has some gift. A boy we knew had the singular faculty of getting, in a wonderfully short space of time, all the meat out of the many thin legs of a lobster—a feat which drives most of us to the verge of despair; and certainly Mr. Sala has the faculty of getting more out of any given country or scene than most people. But to the picture:—"Here the oranges grow tame and the orange trees grow wild; at this instant they are flowering,—a heavenly sight to see. To behold an orange tree in full

bloom, with its triple panoply of leaves, flowers, and fruit, is only equalled by that sight which is not to be seen out of England, that of a still young and beautiful woman with a little baby in her arms, and a grown-up daughter by her side. And for the life of you, you can't tell which of the three looks prettiest and comeliest."

A true and pretty sentence is that, and only to be written by one who has looked upon small humanity with love; who has in his heart that fondness for children which most Englishmen have. The baby, the manikin, the *homunculus*, as we may choose to call it, rules the world; and yet in New York and Paris they tell us babies are going out of fashion; and in baby-loving England, too, there are certain classes who regard children as a bore.

But baby rules the world for all that. He is the principal being, although the softest and the smallest. He does nothing,—cannot, for the most part, speak,—merely crows, and blows little bubbles from his tiny mouth,—an occupation in which he takes inconceivable pleasure; but yet his orders are obeyed, and his gentle tyranny most readily submitted to. Those little fists of his have never yet known how to black another's eyes, nor to beat a woman, except his mother; and yet his hand rules us, and we cannot escape from him. Neither has that hand yet been shut upon gold coin, nor has it carried a sceptre; nor has the round little head, covered with the silkiest hair, or bald as the skull

of a centenarian, worn a coronet or a crown, or black funnel-shaped hat or bonnet, or a professor's black square mortar-board, or the tiara of the chief of all bishops; and yet the little head is loved and tended more devotedly than if it held the imaginative brain of Shakspeare, the wisdom of Bacon, or the plotting intrigue of Machiavelli. We suppose most babies have some hair on their heads, for Sir John Falstaff is careful to tell us "that he was born about three of the clock in the afternoon, with a white head."

All babies delight in "slobbering;" toothless gums, eyes without any meaning in them, pure and innocent as water, unwrinkled skins—for folds of fat cannot be called wrinkles—a pervading smell of violet powder, and a wet chin,—these, as far as our memory serves us, are the indications of babyhood.

But about that cradle what mysteries hang! Those tightly-clenched little hands may hereafter be the priestly and sacrificial hands of Abel, or the murderous fists of Cain; for when we are impacted of such soft flesh and blood as that there is no difference between saint and sinner. No, nor is there any difference in rank. St. Giles and St. James, Dives and Lazarus, look equally stately in the cradle—and in the grave. The greatest epicure and the most starved ascetic fare equally well upon mother's milk, and each sleeps as softly in his mother's arms. And while they are so asleep, listening from their mother's lap or from the rough cradle

to those mysterious noises which the poetic Irish call the "whisperings of angels," the fool and the philosopher are alike. That little head may, in after years, wear the scarlet hood of a doctor ; it may be freighted with all the learning of Vatel or Puffendorff, and give laws to nations. Wheaton and Blackstone were babies once ("lawyers were babies once, *I suppose*," said Charles Lamb, as if there *was* a doubt about the matter), but when they were babies, they perhaps only looked a little uglier than other babes.

A very young child, too, has this advantage over a man: you can't tell whether he is a fool or not; whether he is a down-right idiot, or deaf and dumb. The bib and tucker cover all things ; like charity, they hide a multitude of faults; and if in that smooth, round noddle poor baby has no more brains than a billiard ball, a mother's love will believe that it is the head of a Solon. For dumb children crow and gurgle, and make inarticulate noises. Babies even conceal deafness, because we hope that they are perfect in their faculties. What a touching story is that of a lady of great and high family, who was deaf and dumb herself, though the wife of an earl through her beauty alone. In due course the king o' the world, the baby, presented himself,—a fine child, of course, a future earl, one born to wear a velvet cap circled with gold, bearing aloft seven or nine pearls on spikes, and ornamented with gold strawberry leaves between these spikes; a man who should hereafter be called cousin

to the Queen, without any relationship or affinity, and should be styled Right Honourable, although he had lost all claim to honour. But with all his future honour he, too, might be deaf and dumb. We take our fathers' and mothers' titles; but we also inherit their forms, their minds, and their follies. We have their fortunes and their lands, if they had any, and also the sin that is born in the blood,—the canker-worm that preys upon the brain. And so, as the nurse sat watching over that babe, she saw the countess mother, mute as she was, approach the cradle with a huge china vase, lift it above the head of the sleeping child, and poise it to dash it down. Petrified with horror, wondering at the strange look of the mother's face, the nurse sat powerless and still; she dared not even cry out; she was not near enough to throw herself between the victim and the blow. The heavy mass was thrown down with a tremendous force and crash—on the floor beside the cradle, and the babe awoke terrified and screaming, clung to his delighted mother; and all the terrible antecedents were only preliminary to that tentative blow, which should tell the mother whether her child had God's gift of voice and hearing, or was like herself, a mute.

The equality of mankind which is found in full force during babyhood, and which resumes its empire again in the grave, does not, as we have hinted, last long. The babies of the poor are perhaps as well off as any; not perhaps a

workhouse brat, nor the infant of the starving tramp, but those cottage-born infants, those children of the workers whose daily labour produces enough for the wants of the day—these are the happy ones. We are not all born, thank God ! like Miss Kilmansegg :—

“She was one of those who, by Fortune’s boon,
Are born, as they say, with a silver spoon
In her mouth, not a wooden ladle :
To speak according to poets’ wont,
Plutus as sponsor stood at her font,
And Midas rock’d the cradle.”

And truly those who are the children of the rich have the least happy childhood. The Chinese, it is said, weep and cry when a child is born, and rejoice when it dies, as if it were to be congratulated in getting this dreadful bother of life over, and in having escaped the battle by being killed just on entering it.

Rich children must suffer for their rank even in the cradle. There is some mysterious pleasure in playing in the gutter, and in making mud-pies ; but of that the rich baby is ruthlessly deprived. Then, again, the children of the wealthy are turned over to the nurses ; and nurses (patient, good creatures as some of them are) are not so good as mamma ; for woman, splendid as she is in intellect, and excelling in the warmth of her maternal affection,—for

what man's love, we are asked, ever equalled a mother's? *—will, upon the very least provocation, give over the most precious privilege of a mother to any one else. Wet-nurses suckle, and dry-nurses tend, the children of the great. The blood of the Plantagenets is nourished with the milk that rightfully belongs to the serf. Richard Cœur-de-Lion, King of England, Lord of Aquitaine, soon grew fat upon "the lacteal food, which artfully and chemically combines all the most nutritious particles of nourishment," that was destined by Nature to nourish Higg, the son of Snell, the Saxon thrall. Now-a-days great ladies, princesses, and queens advertise for wet-nurses; and our future lords and masters begin early in life to draw away the sustenance of the people. They thrive upon such sustentation; and at a later period of life—say at six months or so—we are favoured with photographs of the most noble mother nursing the babe, and the highly serene father looking down complacently upon the future hope of the country or the kingdom; but the picture is a photographic delusion, and a pictorial snare. Of old, the mother of Moses gave up the child of the serf to be nurtured by the daughter of a king. Now-a-days we reverse the order, and the children of kings are nursed and tended by the daughters of the people.

* We must confess that in the question there is considerable clap-trap. The father's love is often surely as great, but of a different degree.

But by this the great ones do not gain : the pains and penalties fall upon the babies ; and the babies or young children of the very rich and the very poor have an advanced intelligence, and a worn look on their countenances, that we do not see in the jolly faces of our middle-class children who get their rights.

Mr. Catlin, the American traveller, in his curious book called *Shut your Mouth*, maintains that the Indian babe is much better off than that of any other nation. Our babies (thanks to civilization) die so terribly fast : feather beds, bad nursing, heated air, and sleeping with their mouths open and their nostrils covered, he says, kill most. Ten, fifteen, or twenty a week are suffocated by sleeping with their parents in London only. Seven hundred thousand, nearly one million of children, are born every year throughout England ; and of these one hundred thousand die before they reach the age of one year. But with the rude American savages it is quite another thing. Catlin looked at the burial-places, where the skulls remain above the ground, and saw no babies' heads. "None of our women die in childbirth," said the chief of the Pawnee-Picts, "and none of our babies die in teething ; we seldom lose a small child ; we have no medical attendants." Bad spirits, rum, fire-water, pills, doctors, ground wheat, instead of buffalo flesh and maize, and other benefits (?) of civilization have done their work now upon these tribes ; but it is still a fact that few children die, and

that they are stronger and healthier than ours. Whisky and rum are killing away the red men and women ; but the babe of the savage, according to Mr. Catlin, has a very superior time of it to ours.

Here let us put an important and true paradox by itself. Thousands of babies in well-fed England, and in the houses of the rich and well to do, are starved to death—by being overfed.

Hence, no doubt, it is full time to admit women to a medical education.

But whether in the palace or the wigwam, the baby is king ; the *homunculus* rules the world. Although he comes after us, he is preferred before us ; he shall sit in our seats, he shall look down upon us, and stand in our place of judgment. Strong as we are now, we shall be but weak dust before his feet. For the baby the world exists and the heart of woman was created ; to him it opens and expands and blossoms like the rose ; even as the evening primrose shuts up itself before the strong morning or noonday sun, but opens to the weaker light of the stars, so woman yields her chief love, her watchfulness, her care, herself, to babies. Between man and woman, even between man and wife, there is but an incomplete freemasonry. Man knows not all the pass-words to that heart, clever as he is ; whereas the baby is the Master Mason, and by right of birth passes at once through all degrees. What a bother

and a fuss women make about a babe who has only the third of a chance of ever being a man ; for one-half of mankind die before five years are past, and half of the other half before twenty years roll over their heads. But think you not, or rather do you not know, that Mrs. Anne Hathaway-Shakspeare made a great deal more fuss over young Hamnet Shakspeare, who never lived to man's estate, and over Miss Judith and her sister, than ever she did over that most supreme man who ever lived—that most gracious, generous, loving, and humane heart—that head so regally endowed, that heart so tender, so full of sad, deep thoughts, and yet full strong, and manly, and true? It is the man that we should make a fuss about ; we should crown the veteran, not the raw recruit, with laurels. But for all we may say, and all the world can do, *homunculus* is our rival, our conqueror, and king :—

“Baby lips will laugh me down ; my latest rival breaks my rest ;
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's breast.”

And it is right that it should be so. The infants in Macbeth's vision had circlets of gold above their baby brows. For them the future exists. For man, as soon as he is man, the trial will be quickly over ; the hill will have to be descended ; the doors of this world will close on him ; and to him the next world will open.

And to ensure his success and usefulness in this : his

own happiness as well as that of others which depends on him, to make him cultivate his better-self, it is of supreme importance that he should not be spoiled in the cradle. The mothers, when soft-hearted and soft-headed too, are those who first ruin our very young children.

III.

THE GIRLS AT HOME.

OF the selfish and hard-hearted essayists, the heroine of the "Village on the Cliff" thus speaks. She first reads in a weekly review the review of a novel, and next of a new piece of poetry; and she then turns to an essay. "It was something about women and about marrying; about feebleness and inaptitude and missing their vocation; *about the just dislike of the world for the persons who could not conduce to its amusement or comfort.* Catherine pushed it away impatiently; she did not want to read in black and white what she knew so well already—what she had always to read in the black and white of day and of night—what, with unconscious philosophy, she had tried so hard to ignore."

The fact is so often thrust under our noses, that we suppose it useless to deny that of which there is so little doubt, that the world is getting abominably selfish. If any of the "clever" writers—whom some hold to be wrong, mistaken, and to oburgate to order—were to write upon sisters, they would do so in the style which Miss Thackeray

so dislikes, but which so well tallies with the selfishness of the age that it has become popular. To be a clever critic, one, it seems, must be ill-natured ; and to be "true, so true to Nature," as people have it, the writer must rehearse in an article as much thorough selfishness as Rochefoucauld's whole book contains.

Sisters, with these fine writers, would be regarded as a "mistake ;" for they neither add to the riches nor to the position of a family. Brindley, who thought that God Almighty made rivers merely to feed "navigable canals," the superfine writer in the *Day* who spoke of the choicest flowers in their glorious pride as "almost as beautiful as textile fabrics," and the selfish young husband who thought his wife "the most expensive piece of furniture in his house," might alone compete with those writers who would lower the dignity of womanhood by some mean comparison, in which all the beauty of sisterhood would be destroyed.

We should be told that kissing one's sister was like minced veal, without flavour ; that to take one's sister out was a "bore ;" that sisters were generally in the way ; that they impoverished an ancient house, and did not mend matters in a new one ; and that the only consolation afforded by the contemplation of them was, that unless *you* had sisters other people would not have them, and that other people's sisters were pleasant to look at, to dance and to flirt with, and that when one's extremely selfish life was about half run, it would

be time to marry, so that one could secure a wife and a nurse at the same time.

A great deal of this sort of stuff, of which it is hardly worth while to stoop to say that it is as foolish as it is false, is running over in our journals and magazines, and its repetition makes it credited.

The stupid, pig-headed boy at a school is laughed at and kept in order so long as a certain number of higher natures restrain him ; but when he finds that his side increases in numbers, he cries out boldly that the true policy is to shirk the lessons and spend the cricket money upon tarts. Numbers believe in him, and stupidity and gluttony rule the day. We may laugh as we like, now we are indulging in the nobler occupations of reading novels of bigamy and police reports, about the fine heroes and heroines of Sir Walter Scott, and the bombastic fervour of Claude Melnotte ; but in the days when Scott wrote and Lord Lytton was a young man, if a man had broached such sentiments in the club as are now printed in fair type and on cream-laid paper, he would have been scouted. When Sir Philip Sidney wrote, he dedicated his chief work to his "dear lady and sister the Countess of Pembroke," declaring that she "was most dear and most worthy to be most dear," and that "her desire to his heart was an absolute command;" and for a long, long time in English home history this noble love of a brother to a sister, of the strong to the weak, existed, and we hope it is

not now entirely extinct. We have not yet sunk into such mere utilitarians that we can afford to pull up by the roots all the flowers of life. And a sister's love is indeed one of the precious things of life, and one, too, that will last beyond this life. We shall have no woes in Heaven, it is certain; but we shall all be brothers and sisters; and to the truly noble it is as Browning has it in the "Blot on the 'Scutcheon," the pure love that a brother bears to a sister must exceed all other loves—

"For see, now only see! there's no alloy
Of earth that creeps into the perfect'st gold
Of other loves—no gratitude to claim;
You never gave her life—not even the dross
That keeps life—never tended her, instructed,
Enrich'd her; so your love can claim no right
O'er hers, save pure love's claim."

But in an age when everything is tested just for what it will fetch, and every gentleman is estimated according to the weight of gold that he has about him—when there are no honours given by the Court to virtue or nobility of mind, and peerages are bestowed merely as a reward for political services (and if we are to judge the present from the past, say from the Greville papers, what are these services?), perhaps we need not be surprised that this freedom from earthliness is so little appreciated.

Truest beauty is oftentimes of the truest use, if not the most apparent; and any one who knows life well will speak

with due honour as to the utility of sisters. Even in the houses of the very poor, where the battle of life is a mere series of long struggles, and the constant demands of the world harden the heart and deaden the feelings, the girls of the family are the most self-sacrificing and the best. A somewhat wide knowledge of the poor—a knowledge which has opened and informed the heart that it has touched—enables the writer to aver that he has hardly ever known a struggling family which has not depended more upon the goodness and the tenderness of the girls than of the boys. It is the sisters of the house that keep life sweet. It is the sister who cares for poor father, or who preserves to the last the memory of the mother. Well may the mother say, “A son is a son till he gets him a wife ; a daughter’s a daughter all her life.” It is the daughter who keeps everybody right, if she can ; and who, when anybody goes wrong, shields him with her ready excuses and her love, and who, when he goes right, has recalled his better-self. And perhaps there is not a more piteous sight in the world than to see a good and pure woman proffer an excuse for the folly that she detests, and for the sin that she abominates. How often has a pure and good sister to sit at home and watch the downfall of a bright, clever brother, led away merely from love of gaiety, and brought, step by step, to the brink of ruin by the very good nature and ease which has made him charming in his sister’s eyes !

Nature, which, bound by the golden chains of God's great laws, never errs, has implanted in the married pair a desire for offspring, and for offspring of both sexes. There are always more boys than girls born; and in families where the males predominate, the longing for a girl child is always great. That the Hebrews praised God when a man child was born is true enough, because the tribe sought increase, and the male only carried the name; but in many families in England the birth of a girl causes more rejoicing than that of a boy. And not without reason. Families that are composed of boys only, grow up rude and selfish, very hard, brusque, and unfeeling. The process of education, which begins as soon as a child is born, loses all its tenderness, all its sweetness, when girls are wanting. The extreme difference between the nature of children is seen at once by parents; that, however, which exists between girl and boy nature, can only be duly observed by mothers who, having come from a family of girls, first observe what a boy is in their own offspring. "I would not have believed, sir," said one of these, "that I could have been the mother of such a monster!" The monster had only been asserting his manliness (he was a fine boy of five or six) in the usual way. He was greedy, gluttonous, apt to quarrel, ready to strike, happy to kill and exterminate smaller life, cruel, hardy, fearless unless surprised, cunning and watchful after his own little games, as boys of that age

generally are. He was an unlicked cub, an unpolished child of nature ; something like that happy young American of whom Mr. Pogram spoke in his capital "oration." "He," said Pogram, of one of these rough ones, aged about twenty, "is a true-born child of this free hemisphere ! verdant as the mountains of our country ; bright and flowin' as our mineral licks ; unspiled by withering conventionalities, as air our wild and boundless Pearerers. Rough he may be, so air our barrs ; wild he may be, so air our buffalers ; but he is a child o' Natur, and a child o' Freedom ; and his boastful answer to the tyrant and the despot is that his bright home is in the settin' sun."

This speech, said to be transcript of American "oratings," exhibits the roughness and wild boastfulness of a boy nation, before civilization has fully worked upon it. Boys in our own country would be just as ridiculous, only happily they would be tamed down and laughed at. But as civilization and the knowledge of sister nations reform, purify, and elevate a nation, so sisters in a family improve and elevate the boys. How much we all owe to them we can hardly say ; our debt is never acknowledged ; is this so because it is so large that we know not how to calculate the amount ?

Brothers, in their turn, doubtlessly improve sisters ; and indeed girls without brothers are too delicate and whimsical for the world. Yet the affection of sisters for each other is as remarkable as it is beautiful, and the love of

women for each other—the parallel and antithesis to the friendship of David and Jonathan—may be said to surpass the love of man. When a very affectionate heart has no true sister, it will frequently take up with a mere stranger, and lavish all its love upon her. Thus the two ladies of Llangollen, who carved the wood-work of their own house, and made themselves remarkable for their friendship, were simply friends who had bound themselves to a celibate and sisterly life.

When there are many children in a family, and the first one is a girl, and added to this, the family is somewhat poor, the sacrifices which that eldest sister makes are unknown. What she is called upon to do, how good she is, how inexhaustible is the supply of love that she finds in her sisterly-motherly heart, only those who have had such an elder sister can imagine. How, day by day, the young thing grows old and anxious-looking, from the many cares thrust upon her; how butcherly and bakerly troubles early oppress her; how she gradually finds out the monetary secrets of the family, and that father can't meet that little bill; how she learns to excuse and put off, to coax the tradesmen, and to put the best face on things to casual callers and guests; how she patches clothes, and schemes with the money: and in all this business, true to the flag of the family, forgets all save its interests, fights for one brother's apprenticeship, gets out the second sister as a

governess, and the third sister married, and gradually sinks into a half-honoured old age without a thought for herself, and only partly appreciated—those who have known such good women will readily acknowledge. In the sacred story there is one instance where much is forgiven, because the love shown to the Saviour was much. It seems to us that a great part of the glorious army of Martyrs will be made up of those angels who, while they wore flesh about them, were known as elder sisters.

The sister, moreover, is at once the support of the father, mother, and brother. She honours the father more than any one, and loves her mother with a deeper love even than do her brothers; she is the chronicler of the family, when it is in good circumstances, and believes in the blood and culture which it possesses, and in all the fine stories that Burke tells in his *Peerage and Baronetage*—how Sir Lancelot Smith fought at the battle of Tewkesbury, and another Smith struck the first blow at Flodden; how Bobus Smith intrigued with Lord Holland, and another Smith was chief commissariat officer in the Peninsula, and was praised by Wellington himself. She will tell all about William's college honours, and try to understand the financial concerns that David, the second son, is studying in the City, and the regimental stories which Herbert, the third brother, writes home from India. She thoroughly keeps the family together, and elevates it in the opinion

of all by the honest and great thoughts which she has about it.

Beyond all this, sisters in a family are a great gain. They enable men to form some ideal of women who are beyond suspicion, and who do not even "set their caps" at every man and try to get married as quickly as they possibly can.

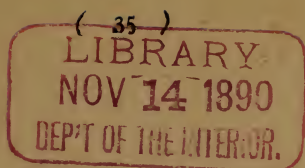
A brother naturally believes in the goodness and the purity of his sisters. (Even in France, where "gallantry," as it is called, is an employment, a Frenchman believes in the purity of two women, that of his mother and his sister, although other people's mothers and sisters afford him, as he thinks, only fair subjects for a gallant attack.) (So when in England we remember that all women are often represented as venal creatures, ready to entrap men, useless—at best only rather cumbrously ornamental—we may look to our own sisters, and remember what they are and have been.) Very frequently such women save families from ruin; often arrest the decay of virtue—which eventually is the decay of worldly prosperity—and almost always they exhibit quietude, piety, peace, holiness, and religion to us in the most beautiful phases. The old symbolists were not far wrong when they made Truth, Faith, Charity, and all other virtues in the female form. With sisters in a family, faith is more frequently retained and religion more sedulously cultivated than without them. The attacks on

faith generally begin when a man has got away from home ; and as young men are quick to change, and ready to receive any new thing, we need not be astonished when we hear of new "schools of thought" at college, nor of the students of the Polytechnic being all free-thinkers. Such attempts are, however, repulsed at home by the pure faith of the women of the household ; and there are few more touching or pathetic passages in English poetry than that in which Tennyson counsels a student to spare attacks on his sister's religion—

"Oh thou that after toil and storm
May seem to have reach'd a purer air
Whose Faith has centre everywhere,
Nor cares to fix itself to form,
"Leave thou thy sister when she prays,
Her early Heaven, her happy views—
Nor thou with shadow'd hint confuse
A life that leads melodious days."

And it is these melodious days that make life pure and beautiful, like some deep strain of sacred music coming from the earth, but gradually dying away amongst the very air of Heaven itself. A conceited coxcomb, who knows how to doubt, and is not noble enough to believe, may try with shadowed doubt to disturb the faith of such a one, but he will not succeed. Goodness in herself is the personal basis of that faith : "Her faith through form is pure as thine ; her hands are quicker unto good ;" and

these, like the coats of Dorcas, shall be her witnesses. And although the sister in well-to-do families be no bread earner, and may be neither pretty enough nor clever enough to add to the credit of the family, oftentimes her sweetness and goodness call down blessings upon it, or, what is much the same, carry the blessings with them. "Oh, my Sophia," says the good-hearted and repentant Tom Jones, when, like the prodigal, he returns from wallowing in the troughs of the swine, "the purity of your sex can hardly comprehend the grossness of ours." That's true. It will be well if the lumbering conceit and grossness of some of our sex will try to understand and reverence the purity and goodness of their sisters.



IV.

THE WIFE'S MOTHER.

IN a sarcastic article on the Divorce Court, and upon the continued increase of divorce cases in this country, a smart essayist asserts that, in "the opinion of an expert, drink and mothers-in-law are the chief agents in bringing about that conditional state of conjugal affairs which is apt to end in a decree *nisi*."

We do not, of course, know who the expert is; but an officer of the Court, one whose mind was filled with the sad and immoral histories of cases there related, would no doubt be well able to discriminate and to point out the chief causes of domestic misery. With the strongest desire to be very lenient to mothers-in-law—nay, with a belief founded on some knowledge and experience, we are afraid that they too often are such causes, though we can assert that, as a rule, such ladies really desire to aid their sons and daughters; that they are frequently generous, self-sacrificing, good, and loving; and that very few persons feel their positions more acutely than the poor ladies themselves.

And perhaps, as midges sting and gnats bite with a persistence and a pain somewhat at variance with the size of the tormentors, mothers-in-law have felt the petty stings of sarcasm in the comic papers more acutely than graver attacks. Whenever a dull fellow wishes to show his smartness, he makes up a paragraph upon his wife's mother. Even Douglas Jerrold, a professed wit, found that in "Caudle's Curtain Lectures" he could not appeal to the feelings of his readers more effectually than by pouring a few columns of molten sarcasm on Mrs. Caudle's mother. The poor women thus attacked must recall the French maxim, *Bel esprit, mauvais cœur*; and this is generally or too often the case—for, unless we put down some of these attacks as a sorry kind of fun, we must confess that man is, as a rule, an ungrateful animal.

Is it not the mother-in-law, before she assumes that obnoxious title—excellent and charming lady then—who encourages Edwin's affection for his Angelina? Is it not she who first sees merit in an awkward, heavy-looking boy, and persuades her husband that "they will make a fine young couple"? Who but her mother has made Angelina what she is—has made her "sit straight," cured that stoop in her shoulders, forced her to be able to execute Kuhe's brilliant *morceaux*, or Beethoven's wonderful inspirations, or to work up that thrilling sentimental song by Franz Abt, which, in Edwin's own vulgar tongue, "regularly did for

him, and cooked his goose"? Is it not to his mother-in-law that Edwin's Angelina owes what little she knows of "Mangnall's Questions" and of cooking, of pies and poetry, sewing and sermons, dancing and divinity? Who "ran to raise her when she fell, and kissed the place to make it well," but mother-in-law? Who pointed out to her the eligible and ineligible "party" to be married? Who rejoiced in her triumphs, and grieved over her defeats, more than the mother-in-law? And who, as a rule, is a warmer partisan of the son-in-law; Benedick, the married man? One may very truly say of one's wife's mother that she is "a little less than kin and more than kind" towards her daughter's husband, and that no one experiences more ingratitude than she.

This ingratitude is all the more poignantly felt because it proceeds chiefly from the being whom she has favoured. Like the eagle shot with an arrow winged with one of its own feathers, she may be said to have impelled the weapon which dealt the blow; for, although in England much more than in France and Germany young ladies choose for themselves, it cannot be denied that the bride's mother has much to do, as aforesaid, in making the match. And proverbially every mother thinks she has a prescriptive right to her daughter. To her, rather than to her son, she looks for a friend and a future home in her widowed and infirm years. The mother takes more notice and exhibits more affection

towards the son when unmarried; winks at foibles and vices she would never dream of excusing in a daughter; allows him more latitude than she would a husband, but when he gets him a wife she does not desire to live with him—she prefers her married daughter's home.

This is more true here than in France; for among many of the good things that we might borrow from our lively neighbours, to whom we fancy ourselves so much superior, is a very constant love and respect shown to the mother by her sons. Much of this may be romantic, but it is none the less strong on that account. There is one woman whom a Frenchman will always respect—it is *la bonne mère*; one whom he always holds pure and above suspicion—it is his mother; one whom he always regards with a boyish love and an almost childish affection—it is *la petite mère*. It is to be confessed that he does not extend this feeling of sacredness to his friends' wives, and that he believes it to be his duty to be an unchained lion as regards paying unmis-takable adoration to any fine Mademoiselle or *charmante Mees* he may meet; but his mother is always surrounded with a halo of reverential love. He does not, however, continue his adoration to one remove—he no more loves his mother-in-law than does an Englishman.

A dislike so profound and so universal, extending, we believe, to every people except the polygamous Turks and Mormons, who cannot be expected at one and the same

time to expend their stock of antipathy upon the mothers of twenty different wives—antipathy being a very valuable commodity if rightly used—must have some cause. It is very ancient; there are traces of it in the classics; and, looking over Plutarch's miscellaneous works, which we call his "*Morals*," the other day, we found him quoting a story to comfort a friend for a disappointment—by the way, of a man who was always jolly; a kind of Greek Mark Tapley.

He once, said Plutarch, "threw a stone at a she-dog, and hit his mother-in-law; whereupon he said, 'Not so bad!'" So, says the moralist in effect, with a grim humour, "You may hit something else very like what you aimed at, and it will be not so bad for you!" Why, in those days, when there were no tea-caddies, when brandy-bottles did not exist, and when no best seat by a sea-coal fire was reserved for the "poor old lady," Plutarch should have told this wicked story, one can hardly say.

Another complaint anent mothers-in-law may be that fathers-in-law are exempt from the hatred that generally accompanies the former and clings to them like the shirt of Nessus. The reason is not far to seek. The father who has got his daughter married congratulates himself that he has settled her for life, and that he is rid of a somewhat expensive burden. As, for the most part, she has seldom been his companion, he cares little about her company. As he is a conscientious man, and has been a good husband,

he is content to believe that the husband his daughter has chosen will be as good, and he troubles himself no further.

Few fathers have that intense and enduring affection for their daughters that was exhibited by the great-hearted Oliver Cromwell, who showed almost the care and tenderness of a mother towards his daughter, Lady Claypole. There are few more touching, or more teaching, letters extant than those of the tender-minded Oliver—stern enough when his duty to his country or his God demanded it—to this sweet lady, who returned his love with a peculiar and pure devotion—which was shared, by the way, by his wife and mother, and all the women who knew the Protector intimately. It is a devotion which does him who excited and those who felt it equal honour, and which should go far to thrust aside the unworthy and unphilosophical prejudice with which too many partisans regard the great man. But, as we have said, the ordinary father is accustomed “to wash his hands” of his married daughter as quickly as convenient. He has to “look after the boys,” and after the main branch of the family. It is in the course of nature—nature as moulded and taught by society—that the girls of a house should be regarded rather as temporary allies of it than as an integral part. (They come and go, but men go on for ever.) The former leave their father and mother, and cleave unto their husbands; *not always so* and for the most part they do this very thoroughly and willingly. Girls who marry enter at

once into the familiar stories and feelings of the family of their alliance—indeed, cross-grained cynics assert that they will know more of the secrets of a house in a month than a man who marries into a family will in a dozen years. They take a pride in becoming one of the new people, and, out of love for that to which they are allied, forget the blood that they came of. By the son-in-law the father-in-law is regarded as an ally and a friend, but never as an intruder. He is looked upon as one who will help, rather than as one who may demand help. He is never so troublesomely intimate as the mother, and, as a rule, although much more distant, shows a more genial and polite appreciation of his daughter's husband.

But the mother, having been from the necessity of things much more a companion of the daughter, does not take the separation so calmly. It is a more serious matter to her. Very frequently it must be a terrible wrench, a dislocation of one of the purest and most beautiful friendships between two persons that the world can witness ; and this must be more especially felt in days of warm home-feelings. "He who has to fill a pond," said Lord Bacon, in one of his essays wherein acute thought is illustrated by homely sayings, "can scarcely water the road ;" and we cannot scatter our affections broadcast if we reserve so much of them for home. A lady who has been harsh with her servants and cantankerous and cynical with her neighbours, who has

forgotten the poor, and ignored the public questions of the day, will often be found to have centred her affections on her daughter with an intensity which bears some ratio to its narrowness. It may be very small in width, but it is deep and strong. She will not "beteem the winds of heaven visit her" daughter's "face too roughly." How then must she look upon the behaviour of a husband whose ways are not as her ways, and who may have been reared in a family with notions entirely distinct from her own, if not antagonistic to them? (The sweet calm of a well-ordered home may be succeeded by the careless negligence of one not accustomed to order; and women, naturally conservative, because naturally more cautious and timid, rebel if "my daughter, poor child," has not everything that she has been used to, and are full of fears for the future and distrust for the present. Moreover, either from a forgetfulness of the past, or from that narrow view which grows at home and is not corrected by going out into the world, "mother-in-law" seldom gives her daughter credit for an absorbing love which will make these odds all equals, which makes little sacrifices very pleasant, and which turns the edge of even serious troubles and greater trials. "Good gracious, my dear, how can you wear that stuff gown!" says one old lady: "What, marry and give up at-homes and receptions!" cries another, little thinking that such gaieties were as little to be regarded in comparison with an absorbing love as an extra

stripe of paint on the cheek of a South-Sea Island belle, or a second nose-ring in the cartilage of a South African beauty.

In trying to account for what we hold a foolish prejudice—for a wise young couple may generally make mother-in-law a good friend and a close ally—we must not forget that there are bad and injudicious old persons who deserve very much what has been so widely said against the class, and who render many a home the scene of the most irritating discomfort. The mother-in-law, say the ill-natured ones, has, about the time that her daughters marry, got tired of her own home and her husband, and is somewhat eager for a little proper and exciting dissipation. She therefore takes upon herself to visit Angelina and Edwin just as the two are getting used to each other, and the stronger or at least more forcible man is settling the new house into its future scale of order, such as it may be. And after a while this new relation, at first welcomed kindly and heartily as one not at all unpleasant, brings a new mind, with new views, taken from quite an opposite point of the compass to that of dear Edwin. Her feelings are at right angles to his. There may be—and who shall blame her, poor thing?—a little jealousy if she finds her daughter forgetful of her mother, and selfishly devoted to her husband; or, on the other hand, Edwin may find that Angelina neglects him, and attends to her mother with a warmth of affection not

suited to his taste. The wife is perhaps to be pitied ; for, if it be hard to serve two masters, how difficult must it be to serve a master and a mistress at the same time ! (Love is tyrannical—nay, he is an exclusive despot. If a man loves his wife with devotion, he will naturally claim the same devotion ; and the third party—especially of such weight as is the mother-in-law—becomes a terrible interloper.

But there comes a time at which this third party makes herself felt in a manner which selfish man seldom forgets. The baby-world is woman's province, and mother-in-law rushes to the rescue of the daughter and to the control of the house when baby comes. Into these mysteries it is supposed that a man is not able to penetrate. He is as much out of place as Clodius was when, dressed in woman's apparel, he assisted at the worship of the Bona Dea. The husband is put on one side as a useless person ; and even the doctor, who may be supposed to have ideas twenty years more modern than mother-in-law, is looked on coldly. An elderly woman generally believes that the juniors of her own sex have not the least idea how things should be done ; and mother-in-law, with the best intentions in the world, is apt to be tyrannical. When baby grows up, the collisions between modern and ancient practice become more frequent, and the presence of a third party in the house is felt to be more irksome than ever. The wife naturally looks up to the mother's riper experience, and the husband, in

he meddles unwisely, finds that his mother-in-law is elevated to the position of a judge—and not only a judge, but a partisan into the bargain. Amongst many good qualities which women have, that of being impartial is not one; and differences, small in themselves, become, when aggravated, the fertile sources of quarrel. It is not pleasant for a husband to have a court of appeal in his own house; and, while it may be very nice for the wife to have some one with whom she can debate the faults of her partner for life, it will be wise if she relies upon her own sense, and, as soon as possible, cuts away the feeling of subordination which she naturally owes to her mother. Very serious quarrels—and quarrels are perhaps the most useless of troubles—could be avoided by a little management.

The mother-in-law is, we think, on the whole, much more sinned against than sinning. Good-nature is misconstrued into officiousness, tender affection and generosity into wheedling and bribery, and the love of watching over the happiness of a being she loves into a mean and spying curiosity. She pleases neither master nor servants, and, in her endeavours to help, often seriously offends the mistress of the house. If she is wise she will rest content with letting the young couple alone, and aiding her daughter at a distance. The whole of the argument may be summed up in the words of an old saying, so significant to husband and wife—significant, but indicative of the selfishness of posses-

sion—that “Two is company, and three is none.” Husband and wife desire each other’s company and cosy chat alone: mother-in-law is in the way with old or young couples; and it will require some considerable cultivation of the better self always to welcome the Wife’s Mother, in spite of the miserable staleness of the jokes against her.

V.

OUR OWN FLESH AND BLOOD.

OF all heartless modern sayings, many of them to be traced to the foolish, inane, empty farces, and other mad and silly comic literature of the day, of which we have so large a superabundance, that which insults our relatives is the worst. "Relative" itself is a poor, weak noun, formed in an illegitimate manner; for to be cousin and of the same stock, generation, and blood with a man, be he a king or a commoner, is easily understood; but to be merely *related*, brought back to some connection with him, is but a thin term.

Some of us seem apt to insult these "connections" with the coldest of words, since we read of them such base libels, which some wiseacre puts forward, as this—"Relations are people who imagine they have a claim to insult you if poor, and to rob you if rich"—a pleasant alternative surely. A poor relation is something worse. "He is," says Lamb (to some it may be necessary to remark that this good-hearted and lovable essayist proved by his life that the article

quoted was written in deep satire), “a piece of impertinent correspondency—an odious approximation—a haunting conscience—a preposterous shadow, lengthening in the noon-tide of your prosperity—an unwelcome remembrancer—a perpetually recurring mortification—a drain on your purse—a more intolerable dun on your pride—a drawback upon success—a rebuke to your rising—a stain in your blood—a blot on your ’scutcheon—a rent in your garment—a death’s head at your banquet—Agathocles’s pot—a Mordecai in your gate—a Lazarus at your door—a lion in your path—a frog in your chamber—a fly in your ointment—a mote in your eye—a triumph to your enemy—an apology to your friends—the one thing not needful—the hail in harvest—the ounce of sour in a pound of sweet.”

Poor relations indeed must those be of whom one could write and feel in earnest like this. Happily it is hard to believe that any one does so. The great evils of any “relation” are two; one, that he is rich, and the other that he is poor; but truly the gold sword cuts asunder more than the ragged saw of poverty, and one can readily believe that there are more quarrels with rich relations than with poor ones. Poverty is a great trial, not only to those who suffer, but to those who stand by and look on. When a man is prosperous he very foolishly, but very naturally, takes all the merit to himself, and he looks down upon his brother in the dust with some contempt. “If Jack,” he says, “had

only made an effort—if he had only energy, what would he not have done ! Now, just look at me.” He forgets that the lucky men are often lucky by accident, and that success does not always crown and accompany industry. Moreover, a want of due recognition and reward will beat down very stout hearts ; and the long, long toiling and waiting crush the hopes out of many good and bold men, who contentedly, or at least quietly, give up the game, and let the tide of life flow past them without trying to catch many fish. While the rich man looks down, it may be, or his wife looks down, upon the poor relation, the latter, on his part, feels ill at ease in visiting his too rich brother. “I can’t stand the expensive dinners, the wine, and the servants,” says the poor wife, as she draws comparisons between her own humble *ménage* and *ménu* and the more abundantly provided house and table of her sister-in-law. Say what we may about poor relations, in nine cases out of ten it is the pride of the poor man that first takes hurt ; and it is the poor man who wings his way from the rich one, and leaves him to mourn, more frequently than we give him credit for, for the loss of his relation. Cloth of gold will hardly match with cloth of frieze. It is the old story over again. A great wit, who is now dead, said of the divisions which pride makes amongst us, that wholesale looks down on retail, and that the man who sells a rasher of bacon is despised by the dealer in whole hogs, although they are of the same trade.

Pride is, of course, the great agent of separation in all cases; but one need not be unfair to the well-to-do and the successful. In relationship, poor pride is quite as aggressive as rich pride, and very often commences the action.

Still, the family is the great bond of unity. It is through it that we advance to the fact that there is another and larger family. It is in it that we must cultivate the better-self. When we can feel that all flesh and blood are of one family—a great, divine, and powerful family, but one which has yet its skeleton cupboard—we shall have advanced more than one step towards a better kind of civilization. It is, perhaps, necessary for action, difference, and mental employment, that the separation of small knots of men should take place; for if the simply selfish family idea were acted upon by any great race—such as the Bourbon or Napoleonic race, as especial examples—it might not be quite so well for the rest of the world. The patriarchal feeling, where a whole family looks up with reverence to one head, enters largely into religion; and, symbolically as well as really, this reverence bids us call God, the Creator, our Father, and regard mankind as our brothers and sisters. This is the general and noble view of the family. That more selfish and ambitious view entertained in policy and trade, that of the Bourbons, Napoleons, and Rothschilds, is more rare, and when found, either in the great world or the little world, is a very great engine of success. Great

families, by a wise combination, have ruled the world, and, without especial talents, have, by being selfishly true to themselves, remained firmly fixed in the world's estimation long after the blessings of Providence and the gift of the genius of administration have left them. They have illustrated the wisdom of holding together, and the fable of the old man, who, before he died, showed his sons a bundle of sticks, and proved to them how strong numbers could be when bound together, and how weak we all are when single. And all through life we see this exhibited. Every now and then there is a family that is true to itself. The uncles help the nephews, the brothers stick together; when one wants a lift, a cousin is ready to give it. Of course, it needs not any great wisdom to predict the success of such a family. The world may cry out upon it if it likes; but it is a deal stronger than the world, and it makes its way through it. It has the elements of success in it—good-fellowship, calm wisdom, mutual forbearance, knowledge of self; for all these are required to make the sacrifices necessary to keep up the family tie.

The success which attends such a family arrangement carries with it the seeds of discord. (Many can help one, says the old proverb, but one cannot help many;) yet he can, and with a true family a kind of mutual benefit society is established, in which one helps many, and many can help one. Look at the clannishness of the Scots, and the way in

which mere kinship is looked on as a sacred claim. Mark their unity abroad, and its accompanying success. The basis of such is simply the real, earnest, and honest feeling of cousinship. So we may grant at once any amount of material power to a family wise enough to be true to itself, and to persist in keeping up family ties.

Amongst some people such bonds are much more prevalent than others. At the two extremes of civilization, the very rude and the very polished people do not care much for their relations. A brutal Bosjesman would just as soon kill and hurt his third cousin as any one else in the tribe; and that furious Negro Sultan, the King of Dahomey, who illustrates the native sweetness of the Negro by slaying his three hundred victims a year, so that he may float his canoe in what Miss Wackford Squeers calls "human goar," probably slays a great many of his blood-relations. It does not matter to him whether a wife's nephew or brother is among the crowd. But these savages are better off than the civilized savage in this—the tie of the tribe, which is, after all, but another and larger name for the family, serves his stead. After seeking to propitiate his vengeful and hellish deity by this human slaughter, in which his subjects participate and agree, the Dahomian Sultan marches his Amâzons against another tribe, and with much joy, revel, and applause, slays them or catches them for the slave-dealers, from whom, if indeed they would go quietly, they get the

only benefit in the life of such savages—an exportation into Christianity and civilization of some sort. And each tribe that fights another for the ultimate honour of cultivating the white man's sugar and tobacco, fights under its family tie. The honour of the tribe is felt in those dusky bosoms in some way; so, as we proceed, this honour grows more tender and sensitive, and under badges and cognizances the simple family grows into the great house.

Amongst Celtic nations, and chiefly with the Irish and Highland Scots (for the Lowlanders are of a very different race), the claims of the family tie have remained in full force; and (a Scotsman will tell you what an Englishman never can, namely, who is his cousin by a sixth or seventh remove.) Banded thus together, society in Scotland and in Ireland naturally fell into a number of circles. Chieftains and heads of septs, or families, came to be the rule. There was *the* O'Connor Don, *the* O'Neil, *the* O'Donoghue, *the* O'Sullivan, each the head of a family; and in the Highlands the same family rule produced the same result. Whether this was good as a whole we may doubt. The poor fellow who was *filius nullius*, the son of nobody, came in for nobody's share. But then there never was such a person. Everybody was related to everybody else. The Irish peasant who lived in contented idleness and poverty upon the estate of his lordship, had the proud consciousness of being some thirty-second cousin to the man whose dogs

he fed with, and whose horses he ran after. You will see this spirit—a loyal and beautiful spirit in its way—often illustrated in the old Irish and Scotch songs. In the “Groves of Blarney” we are told—

“There was Mars, and Vanus, and Nicodamus,
Sure with beauty none can wid them compare;
There was Jul’yus Cæsar and Nebuchad’nazar,
All standing mother-naked in the open air!”

And these statues the poet evidently mistakes for some of the family, for he adds, they were—

“All blood relations to my Lord Donoughmore.”

At funerals and births, marriages and deaths, these family ties came out strongly. Second sight and the banshee, a certain kind of private prophecy and a private ghost, belonged to the great family; but the poor man had his share in them.

But these now live no longer in the faith of reason. These opposing circles everywhere did little good to the nation. The love which was abundant in the family was cold and thin out of it. “Blood was thicker than water,” said such people; and all out of the family was regarded as so much dirty ditch-water. So the circles or septs, like separate globules of quicksilver which are separated by dust, never ran together; and what made the strength of the individual chieftain was the weakness of the nation.

Although there is much that is romantic in those old times, when family love was strong, and family hate made a perfect *vendetta* if any of the Joneses injured any of the Smiths, when there was common cause in a family if any one was injured, without too strictly inquiring into the justice of the case, it became a necessity, as civilization advanced, that ties of this sort should end. As nation after nation emerged into the light of Christian civilization, it found justice and charity—that is, universal affection—far above individual fondness. Because Jones was the head of our family, we had no call to wink at his sins, to put up with his enormities, and to pour all our favours into the pockets of Jones. Our duty was to be just to all men, and to love Brown, who was a good man, but not our own, as well as Jones, who was not a good man, but our own. Gradually, as the dust fell off, these little globules of quicksilver began to form a solid and compact mass, and to merge into each other. The influence of universal learning, of a religion which was as catholic as the sun which shone, and the atmosphere which transmitted and diffused its light, melted away the differences of man. It was found that not only to one especial family had God spoken, but to *all* the world—to the Jew first, and afterwards to the Gentile; that He was no respecter of persons, and that He lighteneth every man that cometh into the world with a human heart susceptible of human love.

So the little families break up into one great family, and the sept into universal brotherhood. We are all brothers and sisters from Adam; and in the second Adam justice supersedes favour. We cannot do more than is right; and if we are right and true to all men, all men will be our brothers. If we only knew this properly, all wars, all evils, all local miseries and want would be regarded as sore evils in the family of man; and all men who tried to draw others together, and to make men better than they are, would be regarded as the true heroes; not those who thunder out dissension, and who slay others. And yet the man of peace is rarely honoured. Lawyers and soldiers make our peers, and are clothed with the robe and the coronet. The truth is, we are still far from the magic circle of the universal family.

Therefore, until we enter that, we had better perhaps cherish the relations we have. We can hardly extend love to them without some bettering of ourselves. The critical, and sceptical spirit which has of late years been so prevalent, and which some people, generally very young men, think so clever, has done much to separate us from family ties, without making us love mankind a whit the better. We are told in a hundred ways that country cousins are bores, rude, uncultivated, and that uncles are only fit to be looked to for the purpose of getting money from. Everywhere there is a sad rude spirit of selfishness inculcated. Sisters

are bores on the one hand, and mothers-in-law and aunts objectionable "old parties," whom we are enjoined to be rude to and get out of the way if poor, and to cajole and get out of the way if rich. All this is as "snobbish" as it is false, and as false as it is mean and despicable. God only can know the patient, kindly goodness which relations, especially female relations, show to us—how they amuse us when babies, or when sick; how they shield our faults and magnify our virtues; how they believe in us when no one else does, watch the rising genius, cherish our first scrap of poetry or wretched sketch, and stick to us at the last when others desert us. Blood is, after all, in its best sense, thicker than water, often sharing our hereditary idiosyncracies. In good truth there are no people in the world who can so fully and truly appreciate us, and who are, on the whole, so true and generous to us, as our blood relations.

VI.

FEELING FOR OTHERS.

IT is astonishing how much even the most selfish people like others to feel for them, little as they may feel for others. Mr. Greville tells us in his memoirs that George IV., than whom "a more contemptible, cowardly, selfish, unfeeling dog does not exist," yet was fond of being pitied, and was never so much hurt as by some caricature of his wig or his whiskers. Perhaps the wonder is that with the persons around him he had any feeling at all. The way to make a man know and despise mankind, is, they say, to make him a Prime Minister. What must he feel, then, if a King?

Happily there are so many millions of us without that trial—but for king or beggar sympathy is equally needful. The word is hardly so homely as we should like, since a Greek derivative poorly expresses an English word, because to nine-tenths of our people it must be a mere sign, a shibboleth which some thoroughly understand, and some but lamely. For we, who have been accustomed to address

the old as well as the young, so well know the plain, honest, sufficient, but by no means brilliant English intellect, that, with all love and honour, we hold it to be but affectation to use fine words, and words difficult of comprehension to the many, if we would be understood by the many. Even so common a word may mislead and confuse such of our readers as think that it means something better or more than our compound word "fellow-feeling." And yet it implies nothing more than a feeling together with another, a kind of Christian endeavour to comprehend the trials, the temptations, the difficulties of another—a kind of "put-yourself-in-his-place" attempt of a good man towards his fellow-creatures.

In Shakspeare we meet with manifold illustrations of this all-embracing human bond—happy thoughts clothed in the most lucid expression which that transcendent genius gave us out of his abundant wealth. And his wealth was, after all, what? In what did his knowledge, his greatness, and his goodness consist? What makes his wisdom? Why should you and I, and the poor weak clerk in prison, who has forged and fallen, and that stately preacher, who upholds himself and many others, all choose to sit to Shakspeare's book? Why should all bow to him, all intellects feel below his? Why was he thus great? Because of his sympathy. It was he who had that wondrous fellow-feeling that made him paint a villain so that an angel might pity and

even love him; and bade us pity and feel for the worm in the bud, or the corporal sufferance of the poor beetle that we tread upon.

Perhaps there is no power in the world which is not wholly of the world that is so magical in its effects as sympathy; and it is something which should call for our especial study as regards our faith that that is based not only upon a suggestion of this feeling, but upon its absolute and unconditional demand. To be good Christians we must love our fellow-man, we must feel with him, enter into his trials—rejoice with them who rejoice, and weep with them who weep. And He who showed the most abundant fellow-feeling, who wept with the sisters that mourned a brother, and felt even for the sinner and the outcast, puts it to us plainly that a want of true sympathy is an absolute negation of any power of true worship, or of any approach to God. If a man loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? Look down into the deep profound which these words reveal, and mark thence how true godliness, the humble approach of man to Heaven, depends upon our love for those on earth.

Mark, too, how the noblest books and the divinest prayers depend for their lasting powers upon the sympathy they show. Why do we so often turn in trouble and in sorrow to the Psalms of David, and to the history of grief,

but that the heart yearns for sympathy, and finds its truest expression therein? Books may amuse, and may make us laugh when we are well—may make us sneer pleasantly at the ignorant and untaught, and think it exceedingly vulgar in a young lady not to sit her horse well, or to be able to talk about the Opera or the State concert; they may tickle our vanity, please our mental palates, beguile our thoughts, but they will live in our hearts only by their sympathy.

Perhaps there never was a time when there was less of this precious quality shown, and surely hardly any time when it was more needed, than the present. Class is arrayed against class by a long series of strikes, and the consequences of these strikes have hardened the hearts of the vast middle class against both the very rich and the very poor. It is a trial of our faith, brought about by this Social-Political science of which we are so proud. It is hard for any one of us who are struggling in life, as most of us do struggle, to regard with a tender feeling men who parade their rights, and by the power of trade combination make each pound in our pockets worth only fifteen shillings. That is an argument to the purse which we can all understand. And yet the working classes have a right to, nay, a necessity for, combining, although, as we long ago pointed out—nearly fifteen years ago in fact—such a right does not and cannot really better their condition; for it is

simply ridiculous to suppose that the position of the working classes is actually improved. They get more shillings, but the shillings buy less. The currency has depreciated ; the men are much as they were. Individual men may and do rise, but so they did, and with infinitely more alacrity, forty years ago.

It is precisely because of this difficulty that we should sympathize with these blind endeavours after something nobler and better. These aspirants are not all wrong ; they wish to struggle into purer air ; they feel for their wives and children ; they are men like ourselves, and many of them better men than we are. Let us put ourselves in their place ; were we there, we perhaps might do as they. But, above all, do not let us harden them by want of sympathy ; not for the dread of the threats or any turbid demagogue, which are as empty as a soap bubble—not for the sake of ourselves, were these threats likely to be enforced—but for the dear sakes of these our brothers—for the sake of our common God, the All-Father, as the Scandinavians well called Him, who will not that we should harden our hearts and break those of our brothers ; and especially for the sake of our true faith. For it is by sympathy as much as by anything in the world that we shall make men believe in God. To form a parallel to our Lord's words, If ye believe not in man whom ye have seen, how can ye believe in God whom ye have not seen?

God, in a worldly sense, is so far off, and man so near. "In how many cases," says an excellent writer, "does the belief in God depend, in its energy and reality, and to some extent rightly, on the actions of men?" Do we think of this in our daily hard-hearted doings, our buying in the cheapest and selling in the dearest market? Go, build churches, thou man of wealth, whose eagerness to get that wealth has driven many a fellow-creature to despair. Ten thousand sermons preached by eloquent divines will not undo half the evil of the acted sermon of your life!

Think of this. Think and know—for you know that it is true—that the minds of sufferers may be and are thrown into despair, and into denial of all good, into doubt of God, and into Atheism, by neglect. "Such," says the writer we quote, thanking him for his good teaching in the best way, by making it more public—"such states of mind are natural because every sign of human love is a witness to Divine love, and every want of human love a failure in that witness. Every man who resists a genuine impulse of pity makes himself to that extent a non-conductor of the pity which God has put into his heart, and robs some one else of a revelation, as well as himself of the blessing of transmitting it. There is no greater trial of faith than human neglect and physical suffering together. Almost any one who stifles a real impulse of genuine pity may be making an Atheist, or clouding the faith of a Christian."

These are weighty words, and none the less so because it may be thought that they would hardly be needed in a land which seems to overflow with pity, and where hospitals and organized charities abound so fully. But it is not to those that we apply the word "sympathy." Alas! of all the thousands of patients that enter the splendid hospitals of London, are there ten who think of their pious founders, or of the sympathy which, by a pen-stroke in a will, gave ten thousand pounds to a charity, and left some angry heir so much the poorer? Such a deed, if it really arises from true sympathy, is beautiful, and the donors may gather the thanks in heaven that they miss on earth. But we speak of living sympathy : a pennyworth of such true love is worth a pound's worth of relief doled out at an hospital, to which the recipients somehow think they have a right, and which too often ministers to their bodies without touching their hearts.

All of us demand sympathy ; and they who pretend to want it not are foolish in their transparently hypocritical cynicism. We desire it when we are young, we demand the love and admiration of our fellows, we ask even from our baby companions the ready ear and the readier laugh when we are grieved or we triumph. The child—a stranger in the world—looking up to its father as the oldest inhabitant, and to those around it as accustomed to the world and its ways, demands guidance, aid, help, love ; but, above all,

it asks of us to enter into its joys and its own little views of men and things, and to understand what it means. The true way of managing children is to feel with them, to know their hearts and take their view. Unless we do so, our hearts will remain strangers to theirs. And children are at once tyrannical and sceptical with their elders ; they know clearly who cares for them, who can enter into their feelings about the dog and the cat and dolly, and the inhabitants of that true Utopia, a child's world. "Oh, I say," cried a philosopher of five to an elder philosopher of fifty, who had been answering at random, "do get away—you know nothing about it !" As for dogs and dumb animals, which require sympathy almost as much as any of us, their instinct that way is really marvellous.

A puppy which follows shambling after half-a-dozen gutter children, and enjoys their play as much as they do, will attach himself to the most sympathetic, and infallibly pick out the best-natured child. The dog of one habitually engaged will know when he is busy, and will find out the most appropriate time to bring him his ball or his bundle of rags to play with ; the sporting dog knows the temper of the keeper ; and the dog of Mr. William Sikes studied with a hidden sympathy the feelings of that atrocious scoundrel. And in return animals understand and are grateful to our human feeling for their troubles and diseases. All nature has some hidden source of fellowship ; she, as Wordsworth

says, "never did betray the heart that worshipped her;" and we feel this so strongly that we own that we are not disposed to laugh at that quaint suggestion of Father Noyes and his fellow-worshippers in America, that the very apple-trees in the orchards know when they are tended and praised and cared for. Many an "old Adam-gardener" in the country will tell us how his flowers, nursed and tended by his hand, will seem, at least to him, to lift their heads and blow abundantly and gratefully towards him who knows their habits, and has sought to understand something of their hidden source of life.

But these are extreme instances. Of this we are sure, that sentient nature demands all sympathy. And it is essentially necessary at home. *There*, at least, is an unusual demand for it. The father or mother who withholds it from children is short-sighted and unwise. Foolish and evanescent their griefs may be, but they are not less real. Rather are they the more poignant, since in this life the vain shows of things dominate over the realities. Hence the more reason that a ready sympathy should explain them, and that we who are accustomed to life should lift the veil and strip the mask from the idol which terrifies the child. Enter into your son's feelings, and speak peace to your daughter's heart. Be something more than the head of your family and a severe judge. There is no revolution but that within your own heart that will lay low the despotism of a

parent and make it into the limited monarchy of a father and a friend. Nor, as the child grows up, will it need less wise counsel and true sympathy. Half the quarrels between husband and wife, no less than between father and son, mother and daughter, arise from the withholding of this precious peace-maker, this wise counsellor, which springs from a gentle and an understanding heart. "He did not feel with me—he did not understand me. He never tried to put himself in my place." How often are these words uttered sadly and bitterly! Nor, as we go on in life, do we need sympathy less. We must seek for love and appreciation in our brothers' hearts. If they seek not to understand us, how shall nobler and more distant beings do so? In the struggle of life, the hero and the coward, the conqueror and the conquered, need sympathy equally. Let the wife especially erect herself above the mere plaything of a youthful affection, demanding continual courtship, and with interest enter into her husband's pursuits, and sympathize with his many trials, which no man is free from. (It is in the struggle of life, which frets and worries, insensibly wearing away our better feelings—in the disappointments of legitimate aims, in the gathering weakness of resolve and hope and faith which years bring with them, in the daily obliteration of some noble resolve—that man's trials lie.) The best of us often doubts, and no doubt often hates himself, gives way to despondency, and becomes a prey to melancholy. The strongest of us

needs some support, some good word in season which shall cheer us on the way, and the wise woman will be ready to give as well as to receive sympathy. There are wives, unfortunately, who put down every trouble to a man's own fault, and to whose stony bosoms one might as well apply for sympathy as for warmth to an iceberg. And let us remember that perhaps there is no one who needs it more than the upright, good man, who walks on the straight path, every now and then parting from friends whom he loves, and who knows as only he can know how much the struggle has cost, and what secret wounds are dealt him in the battle of life. Often the mind that upholds others needs itself to be upheld ; the wise adviser himself needs advice ; the honest heart that seems so true and bold is fainting from some secret sorrow, dying from some little wound which sympathy could stanch. Withhold not such fellow-feeling ; for in giving it you at least carry out the behests of that newest human faith, "the religion of humanity," and in giving it you may be advancing a step farther **even into the confines of the religion of God.**

VII.

FRIENDS AND NO FRIENDS.

BUT we should be careful from whom we seek sympathy if we cultivate the better-self.

It would, perhaps, be considered cynical to say that not one man in a hundred is calculated to be a friend, and that not one in a thousand is now-a-days educated for that important, noble, and ennobling office ; but nevertheless it is true. The public, which is represented as not liking the truth, and which before now has broken the windows of those who told it unpleasant truths, still affects to believe in friends and friendships, but all the while is hugging itself with self-help, and caring little about helping others outside of self. “ Make your own little game ! ” it cries. “ Let coal-merchants combine, for the sake of making money a little faster, and starve a few hundreds of the poor ; let the nation pull down the Church that has ennobled and raised it, that has built schools throughout the kingdom, and given the poor what education they have—kick it out and forget

its services—have a scramble—one may get a ‘big lump.’ Never reward merit—it is troublesome to do so ; raise your rich tradesmen and city aldermen to dignities, and let their sons reign over your sons, so as to make the very title of knight contemptible ; regard a man only because of his money qualifications, and the nice ‘place’ he has in the country ; make money your chief god ; do not help a friend when he is poor—drop him ; know a man when he is rich, and flatter him ; do not invite your relations to your feasts, but only those from whom you expect something ; make every one you know of some use to you.”

Such is the new (or old) patent social utilitarianism, the bastard product of the greatest-happiness-of-the-greatest-number principle. To a reflective man the phrase condemns itself. A very little worldly knowledge will tell us that the greatest number are savages. Certainly the only persons who ought to rule—Christians, because they are bound to, and really do in a measure, consult the happiness of others—are in a woeful minority. But, even in this country, if the bookish philosophers confine us to it, fools are in the majority ; the Secular Society and the Sunday Distinction Society, and Mr. Dodger and the Deliberation Society, would concede this. Are we then to place the happiness of the whole in the hands of fools—or are fools the fit governors for wise men ? What about lunatics and eccentric persons ? How is the majority to be made up, and how

is happiness to be defined? Who has decided what it is? Bentham, whose portrait has as comical a screw on its mouth as that of Rabelais himself, must have heartily enjoyed the intensely roguish humour of proposing this miserable Will-o'-the-Wisp to lead the crowd into the mire. A school-boy's paper-chase is a gloriously intellectual pursuit compared to such a harem-scarem piece of humbug. How can we expect to find true friendship amongst the utilitarians? For a friend is a costly product, and requires a good expenditure of feeling. Hence the satirically candid parson who told his congregation that he could fill his church three times over with his acquaintances, but that the pulpit would suffice to contain all his friends, was not far wrong. England, hastening forward on her selfish patent principles, guided by the philosophy of one who confesses that he was at twenty-one a mere "book in breeches," must prepare herself for a fatal Ramoth-Gilead, unless she suffers her heart and her conscience to speak out.

But, as in extreme northern climates, where there is but little sun, or rather, where the slanting rays touch without warming and have little power, there is found a parhelion, or mock sun, which at times enrages the frozen traveller with its mere show of warmth and light, so the country which produces very few friends produces an abundant crop of false and foolish people, who, to ingratiate themselves with the public or with private persons, pretend to an

immense fervour, warmth, and magnanimity, and hope thereby to advance their own fortunes. Such persons are like the travelling showman, spoken of in Dickens's story, who keeps whispering to poor little Nell, "Codlin's the friend, not Short," and take care to advertise their own merits in opposition to those of their rivals. There is not a movement at the present day upon which these foolish and false friends have not mounted to advertise themselves. There is not a holy cause that they have not bedaubed and contaminated—not a sacred statue upon which they have not stuck their names. Pupkins, the people's poet; Pupkins, the champion of the masses; Pupkins, the working man's defence; Pupkins, promoter of the national society for providing old Tom and new scandal to distressed washerwomen. Do not our readers know Pupkins? Do not they know many of his sort? Do they not also know Slodgers, the people's champion, who convenes a meeting in Hyde Park for the "crushed crossing-sweepers," and gets reported in the newspapers for gallantly defying a policeman who is doing his duty, and calling him a "minion of the law"? Does any one believe that the crushed crossing-sweepers—whom, as Mr. Slodgers said, "a tyrant haristocracy kep' a waitin' on Providence at filthy crossin's, rather than defile their patent-leather boots with the mud of a free city"—ever benefited by their champion's conduct? Rather, is it not well known that the boys of London seized the vacant

crossings and the golden opportunity, and pocketed the pennies of the crushed crossing-sweepers?

Slodgers and Pupkins become, by puffing, public characters; their names have figured on every hoarding, and, false and foolish and inefficient friends as they are, they reap the reward of such advertising. The name of Pupkins is known—that of Slodgers is, if not honoured, notorious. Small consolation is afforded in the belief that these hurtful blunderheads must at some time or other reap the reward of those who meddle and muddle—must at length “land” themselves in the ditch of blind guides, and be fed on the disappointment they have occasioned their dupes. Accompanying them, let us trust, will be the Coryphæi of the Woman’s movements—the crowd of ladies and gentlemen who have rubbed all the bloom of innocence from womanhood by open and unseemly debate of sexual questions—the persons who, for the sake of spurious popularity, have equally maligned man and woman, and who have planted a wound and opened a sore in social life which will bear bitter results in the next twenty years. Well may woman cry, “Save me from my friends!” Well may she be ashamed of those who have led her to the very market-place to be exposed and contemned! Has woman or man gained anything from these foolish friends except spilt ink and heartburnings?

Real friends of the public are not born every day, and

do not advertise themselves on walls, or noisily proclaim that they are proper candidates for the School Board. There are others who have been at once more judicious and more silent.

“Not only we, the latest seed of Time,
New men that in the flying of a wheel
Cry down the Past—not only we, that prate
Of rights and wrongs, have loved the people well”—

but others whose names are unrecorded on earth, but whose labours will not be forgotten in heaven. As a rule, when we find men who often make use of a popular cry to mount into notice, and whose names are associated with that which ultimately benefits themselves only, we may legitimately question their motives. We would not only denounce Slodgers and Pupkins as hypocrites, but as useless, and worse than useless. No one injures a good cause more than a foolish friend. We have a right to weigh such self-constituted friends, notwithstanding their ingenious method of self-laudation and self-advertisement.

Of private friendship enough almost has been written, were it not judicious as well as useful to furbish up and bring forward old truths. Every young man should, if possible, in early life secure a friend somewhat older and at all events wiser than and of a different character from himself. He should be older, because his experience will be able to correct the hasty judgments of youth; wiser, because

it is always well to associate with superiors, not inferiors, in intellect ; of a different character, cooler and more stable, or, it may be, warmer and more enthusiastic, because thereby we see things from a different stand-point.

A good friend is an almost universal want ; and the value of such has been so long acknowledged that Cicero, who is at any rate a good school-authority on the subject, says that friendship is the only thing upon the usefulness of which all the world is agreed. The chosen friend must of course be a good man and a generous one ; such only can be a lasting friend. He must be a man of honour ; because, if by any means the friendship should cease—and it can only cease by mutual faults—he will not turn into an adversary. The selfish old proverb, that we should treat our friends as if they might at any moment become enemies, is rather to be spoken of temporary allies than of real friends ; but it is true from this point, that we should always act with courtesy, repress and conceal our weaknesses, and stamp out our selfishness in the presence of friends. Remember, also, that in friendship, as in most matters of this world, it is better to give than to receive ; it is finer to do a noble action than to be its recipient or the cause of its illustration. At the same time we must take as well as give : that is one half of friendship. Addison has perhaps afforded the best definition of friendship, in telling us that it is “a strong and

habitual inclination of two persons to promote the good and happiness of each other."

The *bon mot* of the French, that "friendship is love without wings," is one of those pretty sayings which explain why the oft-mooted question, Can there be a true friendship between man and woman? must be answered in the negative.

The question is more complex than it seems. The man and woman should be of about the same age, or else friendship deteriorates into patronage; they must be young, since in old age, or even in middle age, enthusiasm is so blunted, and the judgment has become so critical, that all warmth and generosity will have simmered down into mere calculation. These being conceded, the friendship, if between single persons, will ascend to love, and culminate in marriage; or, if between a married and a single person, or between two married persons, is apt to become very suspected, and the man will degenerate into the "foolish friend," since his advocacy will assuredly do more harm than good. To assert that women, the greater number of whom are most generous and self-denying, cannot feel a warm, enthusiastic friendship for a man without any approach to love—to insinuate that they have an ulterior motive of a selfish nature either known to them or but partially concealed—is to be guilty of that which is at once mean and false. But, bearing in mind that friends must be always together, or very frequently so—that they must aid each other in

critical moments, and lay bare to each other the secrets of their hearts—and that friendship must always be active and not passive, the difficulty of what are called Platonic friendships will at once be seen. If a gentleman finds a young lady willing to treat with him upon that footing, he must be first assured that she does not intend to marry, and he himself must be a celibate. It is the unhappy (or happy?) condition of the sexes that friendship between them must precede love, and that the world will always attribute to the warmer attraction between the two those flattering preferences which equally mark friendship and love. Let either of them be properly defined, and the extreme rarity, if not the impossibility, of Platonic friendships will at once be conceded.

Hence, also, in this deteriorated age of ours, arises the difficulty of friendship between two persons ill-matched as to degree in rank, or social position and riches. Thus a duke might possibly entertain the highest respect for and admiration of a literary but poor toiler for his daily bread, but they could hardly meet in the same club, or pursue their avocations together. A parson might delight in the patriarchal simplicity of his aged clerk, but it would hardly do for him—although parsons are privileged to know and be friendly with all sorts and conditions of men—to habitually take tea with him, and to enjoy the innocent chat of his pretty daughters. In both these cases the higher and the

lower friend would cease to be what they should be, and fall into the ranks of fool-friends. The duke would be voted a "cad," the poor author designated a flatterer and a parasite; the parson would not benefit the clerk, and the spinsters of the village would annihilate the character of the parson and the clerk's daughters. The little schoolboy who wrapped a fine butterfly in a flannel petticoat to keep it warm had friendly intentions no doubt, but in the morning he found that he had crushed his pretty prisoner.

We say nothing about the friendships of women; they deserve a separate chapter to themselves, if only because of their extreme rarity. Every girl, with her longing, loving heart, looks out for a girl-friend. She is her first love, her purest, her ideal, her best; but she seldom meets with one of the right sort; and every woman of thirty, maid or matron, looks back upon such friendships as having been enticing, promising, but as empty as the cases of the cracker *bons-bons* after a party; she looks back with a sigh as she thinks how shadowy her friendships were—almost as shadowy as that of Mrs. Gamp and Mrs. Harris.

Another kind of foolish friends are those who, having no judgment, degenerate into flatterers. It would be both a long and a sad history to record—if, indeed, it could be recorded—how nations have been destroyed and how people have perished by injudicious advisers, who have made them first drunk with a false glory, and then hurried them to

destruction. We have a pregnant example every day before us in the present state of France, and indeed of Spain. The Nemesis of nations comes as assuredly to them as it does to men. Of how much wickedness have the foolish friends of Ireland been guilty? How many wild-goose chases has she been led into? How often has she been assured that the shadow in the water was a thousand times better than the substantial bone that she has and holds?

The foolish friend of a man generally tells him a heap of flattering untruths, either for his own immediate benefit or from lack of judgment. Sometimes it is the foolish father, who, by indulgence and a false pride in his son, persuades him that he is a genius; sometimes it is the mother, who by self-sacrificing industry, makes the daughter lazy for life; more frequently it is the stupid acquaintance, who pretends that he has seen the world, and adds, with a bold carelessness of experience and the truth, that "fast life is very jolly," and that it is quite possible "for a fellow with his eyes open" to touch pitch without being defiled, or to put one's hand in the fire without being burnt. Experience has the credit of making—by a supernatural power, we should think—fools wise; it certainly makes them poor and sore. The fox who had cut off his tail, could not persuade his companions that it was convenient and the right thing to do; but our human tail-less foxes have plenty of dupes, who, in after life, and in a base and ridiculous state, lament their

too-trustful belief in the assertions of foolish friends. One or two such will be sure to destroy all but the heartiest endeavour to live the life which it is high time to think of us all doing. Happily, one readily tires of such jays. Hamlet wearies of his interview with the fop Osric, though it lasts but five minutes.

VIII.

ADVICE GRATIS.

CLOSELY allied to our foolish friends are those intimate acquaintances who in one's way in life proffer advice, and howsoever humble and retiring we may be—perhaps, indeed, our humility enhances the chances of our meeting with such—offer us not their aid but their experience.

It is a difficult thing for a young man, who sees matters from a very different stand-point, not to quarrel with these good-natured and too candid friends; for these advisers sometimes hit our faults pretty shrewdly, and have quite a genius for treading upon our family, hereditary, and tenderest corn. But he had better restrain himself. Hamlet says some hard things to Polonius, but they do not hurt the garrulous maxim-monger, and certainly do not heighten the character of Hamlet.

Everybody imagines that he is capable of giving “no end,” as he would say, of good advice. He firmly believes in being, if not a wise man himself, a wise man for the sake of others. He is like the famous Lord Chancellor who, in

his own legal affairs, made plenty of mistakes, but who never gave a wrong judgment, and whose only way of securing wisdom for himself from himself was to pay into one hand a fee, which forthwith pocketed it. Then he was sure to be right—he had taken advice. So our general adviser will admit mistakes in his own actions, but, in the matter of advice, he is “as pretty a piece of flesh as any is in Messina.”

This sort of belief, inherent in man, and of course in woman, breaks out early. We have our boy-advisers and our girl-advisers at school, our infant Samuels, who are early wise, and young Deborahs, who will sit and judge Israel. The simplicity of Christian folk who misread the text of wisdom proceeding from the “mouths of babes and sucklings,” not as prophetic of a new dispensation, but as real and actual, gives some credence to this early claim of the young; and in religious families we find small boys ready to expound texts full of insuperable difficulties, and apprentices and young clerks, confessedly failures in their own “line of business,” as they would phrase it, ready to enter the Church and to undertake a cure of souls. This reminds one of a discontented coachman who complained of his team, “They all want to go different ways—one pulls one way, one another; no one consults me. No, I’ve had enough of it; I want some easy work now—a good sinecure. I should just do for a Prime Minister!” And it is really to be noted, as amongst instances of ignorance much to be

deplored, that the lower orders believe that men high in office do not work, that a Prime Minister's place is a sinecure, and that he always finds some one else to work for him. That ministers of the Crown play and "sport away" the gold that the people pay in taxes is a vulgar tradition older than Cowper, who made use of the prejudice. How hard Palmerston worked even in sickness, the jauntiest and least jaded of all, may be seen in Dr. Granville's interesting memoirs.

The amount of advice which Finance Ministers receive is something astounding. There is not an article on the earth or under the earth, in the waters or above them, but is brought forward as taxable. It was no doubt some officious fool that suggested to the Roman emperor that celebrated tax which has left behind it a memorable epigram on the sweetness of money; it was another of the same sort who doubtless made Pitt tax the very light of heaven, and endow England for many years with ugly houses and badly ventilated dwellings; and perhaps, if ever we know the secret history of the present time, we shall find that Mr. Lowe's match-tax was a happy thought of some wiseacre, although the classical and punning motto may have been the late Chancellor's own. We must not credit such volunteer advisers with all the errors of the Government; on the contrary, there is much that we owe to them in Army, Navy, Church, and State; and it is one proof of the happy constitution of England that almost every tax-payer is one who is

an ardent politician, and who spends many of his waking thoughts in endeavouring to discover how he can put a burden off the shoulders of his own class, and quietly adjust it on those of another.

In private life advisers are as thick as leaves in a wood, or as flies in a grocer's shop. A man may be too mean for any employment except listening to advice ; he may be too poor for a bribe ; but he is not too poor to receive a good round lump of advice upon any occasion. Amongst the many evils from which the poor man suffers, we do not perhaps reckon that of the multitude of advisers who darken counsel by words without wisdom, or take into account its vast importance ; for a man who gives another advice is either a leader or a mis-leader—blessed if the first, accursed if the last. Every lady with five hundred pounds a year of her own can tell the poor sempstress who earns her fifteen shillings a week how to spend and scrape and save much better than that poor victim of experience herself. The gentleman with his fifteen thousand a year knows how to teach Hodge with his pound a week and six children the way to bring up a family in honesty and sobriety, in the fear of God, and out of the workhouse. The squire means well, but he cannot know what Hodge knows ; and the working-classes are irritated beyond endurance by vexatious suggestions which can do no good, and too often betoken a miserable thoughtlessness. There are two or three instances

of this good advice turning to bitterest poison which have become historical. It was said in a tone of genuine pity, by a lady of the Court in the reign of Louis XVI., when the mob of Paris was clamouring for bread, "Poor creatures ! No bread to eat ! Then let them eat cakes !" The last sentence was meant as a benevolent suggestion, and was not more thoughtlessly stupid than a noble Duke's letter to the papers, recommending in the Irish famine, when the poor bodies of the "finest peasantry in the world" wanted much filling with bread and meat, a pinch of curry in warm water as a soothing and nourishing soup.

The general adviser, with his little hoard of cut-and-dried maxims, meets us at every turn of life. Let us suppose that we are about to fulfil what Mr. Ruskin thinks one of the ends of life, and build a house, well planned and comfortable, suited to our modest requirements. Straightway we are taken in hand by the "learned Kett," who lays down, as three irrefragable rules—(1) that a man should never build after he is forty-five years of age—which is just about the time that man, who is a building animal, desires to build, and has earned money to do so ; (2) that he should not lay a stone unless he has five years' clear income in hand ; (3) that he should always expect that the cost will be twice, i. not three times, the amount of the estimate. No doubt he who bears this advice in mind will not be disappointed, but, if all were to do so, building would nearly cease. Why

should a builder's estimate be so uniformly insufficient? What should we say of a tailor or a butcher who contracted to supply us with clothes or meat at a certain price, and then demanded double his first charge? But this is not the only advice the ambitious builder of a house meets with. Architects by the score encounter him on every side; in the matters of drainage and ventilation he cannot stir a step; certain parties insist upon telling him all about his dust-bins; and, lastly, to dwarf or stamp out all originality, there is a general shout that, 'Fools build houses and wise men live in them.'

§ In the matter of taking a wife—a far more important step than that of building a house—one's good advisers would be as plentiful as blackberries were an opportunity given. But the other sex perhaps suffers more than we men in that matter. It is just the one thing upon which almost every man enters with a cruel doubt, but upon which he is supposed to have made up his mind. At any rate, the best way to make up a lover's mind upon that point is to oppose him; then, and then alone, he is sure of being right. But his friends for the major part are sure that he is wrong. How many brides and bridegrooms have been married this year whose friends have not had serious doubts as to fitness, compatibility of temper, agreement of habits, of thought, or of religion? As for the bride herself, the probability is that she has been so lectured and bored by advisers and good-

natured friends that she enters upon her wedding duties in a sea of doubt, and with a dim notion that she is making a muddle of it. And for both man and wife, nay, for single as well as married, there remains that sweet bit of consolidated wisdom, that very essence of bitter advice, which was given by a sage some years before the Deluge, and has survived in some Shemitic record every other scrap of antediluvian wisdom. "Shall I marry or not marry?" asked a not very ardent youth of the sage. The ancient took three weeks to consider, and at the end of that time delivered himself of these oracular words, "Whether you marry or do not marry, you are sure to repent." We are sorry to add that several other sages have laid claim to having originated this icy bit of comfort, the coldness of which is only equalled by its utter uselessness.

It is a very difficult matter to give advice well ; so much so, indeed, that the best adviser is he who really knows little or nothing of the parties for whom he arbitrates, or to whom he gives advice. He must merely consider them as abstractions, and throw aside all other considerations save the justness and fitness of the case. Above all, advice should seldom be volunteered ; it is one of the things of which we can do with a little, and that we must desire, as Sairey Gamp said of the bottle of gin to which she so often applied, "Don't arst me whether I will or whether I won't have none, but put the bottle on the chimbley-place, and let me put my

lips to it when I am so disposed.” Advice is all very well when we are “so disposed,” but when we are not it is offensive. It is essentially of advice that we may say speech is silver and silence is gold. It always infers, however gently it may be given, a certain superiority in the giver over the receiver. Hence the sage Johnson hints that “advice is offensive, not because it lays us open to unexpected regret, or convicts us of any fault which has escaped our notice, but because it shows us that we are known to others as well as to ourselves; and the officious monitor is persecuted with hatred, not because his accusation is false, but because he assumes the superiority which we are not willing to grant him, and has dared to detect what we desire to conceal.”

The “superiority” is perhaps the most galling to our pride; hence he who gives advice should do as nurses do with their physic—give it in small doses and with something to overcome the nausea it creates. The powder-and-jam school so much affected in “pretty little tales for pretty little children,” and in sweet, angelic tracts, in which everybody is made happy at the end—and all tears are very idle tears, indeed, since they have been wept in quite a mistaken notion of life—is one to which most professional advisers are at last driven. In fact, every one is so opinionated that he imagines that his own advice is better than any one else’s until he loses by it.

Swift confesses that he forgets whether advice is one of the lost things which Ariosto says are to be found in the moon, but certainly it ought to be there, since so much of it is given and so much thrown away and lost. Even those who ask advice do not take it—

“His friends were summoned on a point so nice
To pass their judgments and to give advice,
But fixed before and well resolved was he,
As those who ask advice are wont to be.”

And this is the only pleasurable bit of revenge that the advisee has over the adviser. He need not take the advice, and he can think the man who gives it an officious coxcomb all the time he goes prosing on with his *pros* and *cons* and his eternal *pour et contre*, of which the French Bar in the time of Louis le Grand afforded so brilliant an example. The lawyers balanced their periods and their quotations, quite regardless of the sense or justice of the case, as an acrobat balances his pole, and delighted the audience with their intellectual agility. And the summing-up of the judge was an equally clever piece of forensic cookery. But then it was seen that advice in some cases is pleasant, and that is to the third party, who listens to it, and admires the application which he imagines that he sees; the most scathing and cutting sarcasms on the conduct of a prisoner at the bar are always most relished by the audience in court. It is pleasant to hear good advice given, or to read it when

intended for others ; nay, we may recognize our own case in that which is before us, and receive timely warning by a light which was held out to save some other wanderer from getting into trouble. It follows, then, that advice, amongst other qualities, should be general rather than special : if it fits our case, we profit by it ; but, when we get it made to order, it is too often like an artistically-shaped dandy boot, which pinches the wearer so terribly that it hinders rather than aids his progression.

The best advice, and that likely to do most good, is like the most wholesome bread, home-made. It is, perhaps, for that reason the rougher, but the sweeter too, and the most palatable. A gentleman the other day, summoned by the school-board, paraded the fact that he was, very happily for himself, under the governance of his wife. He was an ass for making it public, but he might have been wisely governed. Certainly some of the very wisest and bravest advice men get is from their wives, although a wife is not always nor necessarily a good adviser—she needs must be somewhat of a partisan. But then she is certainly another, a calmer, and a better self, and men wisely revert to *them*, although too often one has reason to say with Burns :—

“Ah ! gentle dames ! it gars me greet,
To think how many counsels sweet,
How many lengthened sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises !”

IX.

PRIDE IN THE FAMILY.

“THE big Ha’ Bible once his father’s pride,” is not now the work most studied by the middle-class Briton, but there is a book, a very large book indeed, containing nearly two thousand pages of double columns and close print, which Thackeray called the “Englishman’s Bible.” It is not his ledger, nor his book of the law, nor his Shakspeare, nor his Milton, nor even his tables of interest, by which he can calculate to a fraction all his gains in the various companies he has joined ; but simply his peerage. It contains about as many lies as any book can well contain, although it is fairly edited, and may be called historical. But the fact is, that this peerage to which Sir Bernard Burke puts his name as editor, and to which he pays much attention, is contributed to by the families themselves, the exploits of whose progenitors it dilates upon, or the bare names of whose ancestors it contains. Hence there arises a mass of fiction and error which is incalculable. Ancestors are found for any one who achieves

distinction, for any Lord Mayor who may be made a baronet, or for any Court favourite who, however unworthily, may be raised to the Peerage. We are told that the ancestors of this nobleman fought at Hastings or Bosworth-field, and how the founders of that family claim kindred with the Vikings of the North, and sailed across the German Ocean with King Olaf or Red Eric the Earl. Such, to say the least of it, is difficult to prove, and opens up a very serious question when proved. All that one can say of being descended from the Conqueror himself is that one traces one's pedigree up to a brave man ; but surely we are not all cowards to be so proud of bravery ; and if, like that of the Yankee pedlar, our "father had fit inter the Great Revolution" as a common soldier, we might be more proud of the immediate than of the distant progenitor. But all men in a battle are brave, or they pass for brave, which is in result the same thing ; and the companions of William the Conqueror were merely a small band of hired soldiers, whose descendants have most likely died down in the troublous times that succeeded him, or were afterwards used up in the Crusades, the Norman wars, and the Wars of the Roses ; so that very few really Norman families remain. But the argument of long descent being put aside, as difficult to prove and useless when proved, we shall not do away with that feeling called "family pride"—a sort of reflected selfishness, which, like the house-leek or the stone-

crop, seems to grow and flourish all the better, the smaller the nourishment it receives. If you plant stone-crop in a rich loam, it runs "spindly," as the gardeners say, and dies out; but if you stick it in the cranny of an old wall, where there is only a bit of dried mortar and a small portion of rotten stone for it to adhere to, it flourishes admirably. So is it with family pride.

In Mr. Dickens's novels family pride is skilfully portrayed in very lowly people. Mrs. Wilfer, whose husband is a poor clerk, but a very angel of goodness, takes no delight in him, and does not even know what a treasure she has; but gives herself airs about herself, *her* family and *her* belongings. So also in "Nicholas Nickleby," Mrs. Kenwigs, whose husband is an ivory turner, is always talking of *her* uncle, who is a tax collector. Women abound in this pride much more than men do; and it is a subtle touch of observation both in Dickens and Thackeray that induces them to make their characters always refer to the official position of the hero who *ennobles* the family. "My uncle the beadle, my grandfather the turncock,"—such officials have graced families heretofore and do so now, and are just as legitimately referred to as "My uncle the bishop," or "my grandfather the general;" for it is to be accepted as a rule, almost without an exception, that whenever a man rises he rises through himself, by his own efforts, and that his family has nothing to do with his advancement

—that is, his brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces, grandsons and daughters, and all the rest who brag about him after he has risen.

To vaunt our family is, in a cunning way, indirectly but efficaciously to vaunt ourselves. Yet some of us have portraits in our own family, to which we own a mysterious and perhaps a stupid attachment; we feel that somehow such portraits prove that the family has been compact and known, and rich for some time, although the present representative may be poor. We have one or two old books, heirlooms, a chair or so, and such like wrecks of genteel ancestry, and of course are attached to them. Nay, we do not despise as we ought the genealogical tree; and yet we know that great great grandfathers and uncles did little or nothing save serve in the army, or sit upon the bench as county magistrates, as stupid as the rest. And we know, philosophically, that the meanest beggar is as far descended as the king, and that the beggar's son could count a roll of ancestry, if he only knew how, longer by one than the beggar; nay, we know that the poor have, as a rule in life, been better and purer than the rich, and that it would be wiser to be proud of being "the son of parents passed into the skies" than of being the descendant of Cæsar, Alexander, Genghis Khan, Napoleon Bonaparte, or any such conquerors. And yet, being men, we and every one of our readers have a certain family pride, although we

laugh at it, and sneer at it in others, as any sensible person must, because in its sum total it is a distorted reflection of self—that is all.

Some families, which cannot boast even a rector or a militia captain to date from, take pride in personal attributes, which some others would think rather to be distortions than otherwise. Most of us are familiar with the Brunswick mouth, which shows the front teeth, and gives a somewhat foolish appearance to the family; but then its possessors reckon it a beauty, because it is a mark of breed. There was the Austrian chin of poor Marie Antoinette—a long chin, not pretty, but distinctive; then there is the retreating forehead of the Braganzas, a proof of high breed no doubt, since by too much breeding the Braganzas very nearly approached the apes. A better feature in English families is the Plantagenet long flat cheek, which Norman peculiarity Emerson says may be seen in Englishmen of to-day. Nay, he tells us that we preserve the very features of the old race amongst us. “In the bronze monuments of crusaders lying cross-legged in the Temple Church in London, and in those of Worcester and Salisbury Cathedrals, which are seven hundred years old, the heads are of the same type as the best youthful heads of men now in England; please by beauty of the same character;—an expression blending good nature, valour, and refinement, and mainly that uncorrupt youth in the face of manhood, which is daily seen in the streets of London.”

It is family pride that makes one copy out that passage, for the nation is in itself but one great family ; and villages, towns, counties, or countries, have a natural pride in knowing that the great and good qualities of the men they have produced are appreciated ; and there is this about the feeling which is admirable, which is, that it leads us to admire that which is noble in others, although we may believe that in some indirect way the glory is reflected back upon ourselves. Thus in Yorkshire, when a racehorse has been successful in winning a race, the glory of the achievement is shared by the whole stable or village ; as if, indeed, a horse from that identical stable were any the better on that account. But the glory of a family does help a man through life, until, indeed, he becomes very debased. Men believe in association ; and a Stanley is honourable, not from the best motives, but because he is a Stanley. *Noblesse oblige*. Having to date from a fair lineage, a man will be careful not to soil that lineage : thus the Spartan boys were brave, not alone because their nerves were stronger than those of others, but for the reason that they were Spartans, and had an hereditary virtue descending upon them from their family or other people. It was not a physical—it was a mental gift : to be base or effeminate was so utterly out of the practice of the Spartans, that it never entered into their minds to become so.

With this kind of family pride we can all sympathize.

When we hear a man proud of the Smith nose, the mouth of the Browns, the forehead of the Joneses, or the hereditary squint or wall-eye of the Williamses, we may set him down as a fool ; but when we meet with a man who finds it incumbent on him to act well and honourably, because his family always did so before him, we are delighted with that honourable respect which he pays to the virtue of his family. And such hereditary virtues are not uncommon. "My father," said a tradesman, the other day, "always paid his rent at twelve o'clock on quarter-day, and I will always do so;" and the man, through life, had made great struggles to keep up to that excellent virtue of punctual payment. So we have an hereditary forwardness in brave actions : some families in out-lying villages are always ready to head the list of Christmas benevolences ; some are devoted to a life at sea ; some to the army and to particular service therein ;—all through family pride. Certain regiments, as the "Fighting Fiftieth," having once earned a reputation, dower every private soldier in their ranks with a family pride in their good name, which makes him all the better man. Reputation continues to act long after the particular deed that won it is forgotten.

There is, then, even a very beautiful side from which we may regard this foolish pride. When pride in ancestry came up we hardly know ; for certainly all the ancients did not look, as we do, to a man's family, since the Romans could adopt

a total stranger, who, thereon, had all the merit of blood-descent. Some people think that the lineage of our Saviour, given in the commencement of two of our Gospels—and given for an especial purpose—set men's minds, always prone to self-flattery, upon the utter vanity of birth. But certainly the ancients did refer to paternal acres, and the deeds of their ancestors, as well as we do; and Plutarch, in his familiar, easy way, lets us see that the pride of ancestry was no stranger to him. In the life of Brutus, who slew Cæsar, and who is one of Plutarch's great favourites, he lets us into the secret at once: "The great ancestor," says he, "of Marcus Brutus, was that Junius Brutus to whom the Romans erected a statue of brass, and placed it in the Capitol among their kings." Again, speaking of his hero, he says that "he was formed for virtue, both by nature—*i.e.*, descent—and education;" and he further on tells us that the partisans of Cæsar would not have it that Marcus Brutus was descended from Junius Brutus, whose family, they said, was extinct with his two sons. Marcus Brutus was, according to them, a mere plebeian, the son of a steward, who was "one Brutus, of mean extraction." What does it matter to us now who did the noble action? What do we care if the Bruce came of a line of kings, or if Wallace was a mere common fellow? Nelson, Blake, Cromwell, have served their country; we hardly want to know whether they were of noble blood or not. How many disputes have

we had about Shakspeare!—some saying that he was the son of a wool-stapler and butcher, who was of mere common and puddle blood; and others that his lineage, like his name, was knightly. Certainly he himself paid for his father's grant of arms, that well-known spear on a bend; but surely no one would have cared to ask whether he was well-born or not, if he had been as undistinguished as the thousands of fine-blooded noblemen who lived and died while he was writing plays! There is this strange peculiarity about family pride, which is indicative of weakness—it likes to claim all great people as of a great race. We are Chinese in our sympathies. A great man in China ennobles his ancestors; he cannot do a great deed without very properly reflecting a lustre on his father and mother and grandfather—the reverse way to our own, but nevertheless the wiser way.

“Everything in this world,” said a great philosopher, “has two handles;” and if we take hold of the right one we shall do well. The man who prides himself upon the worth of his family may himself become worthy even by that weakness. But woe to the man who has nothing to boast of but the position of his father, the beauty or riches of his mother, and the virtues of his ancestors! “He is,” said Sir Thomas Overbury, “very much like a potato—the best part of him is underground.” Even Lord Lyndsay, in his “Lives of the Lyndsays,” is obliged to resort to a senti-

mental regard to ancestry, rather than a pride in it, of which he is half-ashamed, and talks of the "additional energy which the *precepts* of a father should inspire us with, when we trace the transmission of those precepts from father to son through successive generations." Alas ! such tracing is a difficult task. We cannot honour a man who stands for merit merely "on his forefather's feet, by heraldry proved valiant and discreet;" for we must in our heart of hearts believe with Young that self-help and merit arising from our own virtues and actions are the things to be looked at.

"Men should press forward in the glorious chase;
Nobles look backward, and so lose the race.
Let high birth triumph ! What can be more great,
Nothing,—but merit in a low estate."

X.

SNEERS AND ILL-NATURE.

It is a great deal more easy to hurt than it is to please and gratify a man. The Emperor who offered a reward for a new pleasure, would have been quite satisfied with an old pain ; a kick on his august shins, for instance, would have roused his ire sooner than the sweetest sauce would have stirred his jaded appetite.

Recognizing and illustrating the above truth, the fools of the human family take to jeering, sneering, and ill-nature, as the readiest way of making their weight felt. A gnat would perhaps sink into the insignificance of being forgotten, if he did not make himself felt by his sting ; and the thrusting out of the bayonet of a wasp is no doubt a sudden pleasure to it. Moreover there is an immense power in a laugh, especially when raised at the right time. Few persons, unless they are exceedingly strong-minded, can stand against it ; and when a fashion or a mode of thought is overgrown and old, a sound honest laugh will often knock it down.

Lord Byron wrote of that brave and honest satire "Don Quixote"—

"Cervantes *laugh'd* Spain's chivalry away,"—

but his lordship did not explain that Spain's true chivalry had long since departed, and that the mere outer clothing, shell, imitation, symbol, and idol stood in its stead, to be knocked to pieces by a worn-out, broken-down old soldier, dying from neglect, poverty, cold, and hunger, and yet the most powerful and by far the best man in all Spain; truly, almost the only one, for what to us, to our grandfathers, and great-great-grandsons, will be the Spain of his day, except Cervantes? All the pride of her monarch, great as it was, so great as to disdain the earth and to claim Heaven,—all the pride of its great churchmen, who swayed the minds and the faith of millions, and who dictated the very terms upon which Heaven was to be won and Hell avoided,—all the pride of the great swelling hidalgos, the great dons, cousins of the king, and of the bluest blood that circulated in Castile,—all the pride of the clerks, the heralds, the officers, the scriveners, and the very beggars (and a Spanish beggar at that time held himself higher than an English nobleman)—all of this was shaken to pieces, and faded like the ghost in "Hamlet" "on the crowing of the cock," before the honest laughter of Cervantes; and he remains, worth more than all of his nation and his day put together.

So there is, as there should be, much power in a laugh. There is also much in its imitation,—its bastard imitation, the sneer. A good sound laugh is something pre-eminently human. It is not godlike, because we suppose it is not compatible with the modern awe-full notions of the god-head. But the old divinities laughed and smiled ; and when the divinities laughed, as at the tripping up of Hebe in serving the nectar, or at human follies, the heavens re-echoed. For the old gods were more human and nearer to man, being creatures of his high imagination ; therefore they laughed ; and man laughs,—human, as Shakspeare has it ; but the devils sneer, and of late it has become fashionable to imitate the devils.

Why sneering should be thought clever is not difficult to guess. The sneer implies a superiority ; and the insect on the leaf is too apt in this world to affect an easy victory, which he has *not* won over the insect in the dust. He who has not battled with life, and knows little of its hardships, not only of the difficulty of gaining a battle, but of keeping his soldiers together on the march, will criticize the old and well-worn veterans who have won in many a hard fight,—will detract from their merit ; and after the thing is done, point out an apparently easier and better way to have done it. And the very act, illnatured as it is, seems to confer upon the sneerer the merit which he detracts from another ; just as in savage countries the painted and tattooed brave,

who has killed a warrior of merit and excellence, claims the victories of the deceased manslayer.

Moreover, the human heart does so love truth, and gives so willing a credence to that which people say, that in many cases the detractor is believed ; and this is especially the case when the sneerer has the power of commanding the utterance of a respectable print. The oracular *pronunciamientos* of the newspapers are sometimes ridiculous enough ; but they have before this broken hearts, and made the sensitive breast of the poet or artist dilate and throb with the most painful feelings. The animadversions of non-military critics, written at home by the fireside, and expressed with as much freedom as ignorance, have been more than suspected of driving an officer to give battle at an illjudged time, and have cost both men and reputation ; and more than one gallant man has been driven into enforced exile, to misery and disgrace, nay, even to suicide, from the same cause. And yet it was not envy, nor hatred, nor malice, that prompted the conceited wiseacres to act as they did ; but merely a priggish delight to believe nobody in the right but themselves, a wish to offend and to hurt, and a love of meddling. It is a happy thing for us all that they often burn their own fingers.

After a certain time spent in practising the art of sneering, wicked and really stupid as it is, the initiated get a certain delicacy of touch which is easily seen by an acute

observer, but which is dreadfully offensive to the young. They cannot stand up, if they are at all ingenuous and intense in their modesty and feeling, against such sneerers; while they find, and find readily, quite enough strength to repel the coarser and the less practised scandal. Sheridan has so well described the two—the coarser scandalizer, and the more effective and dangerous sneerer—that it would be a loss not to quote him. “Mrs. Clackett,” he says, “has a very pretty talent, and a great deal of industry; she has been the cause of six matches being broken off, and of three sons being disinherited; of four forced elopements, as many close confinements, nine separate maintenances, and two divorces. She generally designs well, has a free tongue and a bold invention; but her colouring is too dark, and her outlines are often extravagant. She wants that delicacy of tint and mellowness of sneer which distinguish your ladyship’s scandal. Everybody allows that Lady Sneerwell can do more with a word or a look than many can do with the most laboured detail.”

It is with the touch of a master also that Sheridan shows us the motive for such malignity, while he makes us almost pity the woman whom we should detest. “Wounded myself in the early part of my life by the envenomed tongue of slander,” says Lady Sneerwell, “I confess I have since known *no pleasure equal to that of reducing others to the level of my own reputation.*”

It is indeed that motive which induces our modern Sneerwells to indulge in their smaller and less noxious enterprises ; which, however, if smaller, have the advantage of being considerably meaner. We can understand why a woman who has herself been stung should feel impelled by an envious spirit to blacken the characters of her sisters ; but a generous nature cannot but be astonished to find that persons who are unknown to him, whom he has not wronged, nay, those whom he has benefited, are ready to detract from his modest stock of merit,—to whisper, to hint, to asperse, and to blacken without a cause. But such is the fashion of the day. Let any one have a name known to the public, and let that name be mentioned, and as surely as the night follows the day, after a little cold praise, cold as the morning's sun in winter, hot envy and jealous detraction follow. “He is clever of course, *and* the work would be good, *if*——” And then the floodgates of speech are opened, and the poor fellow has black marks by the dozen affixed to him. And frequently all this will be done for just the same reason as that which induced the countryman to cast in his oyster shell to the ballot to banish Aristides ; not because he knew any evil of that great man, but because he was tired of hearing him praised ; nay, he was sick of his name. And it unfortunately happens that the temper of the public is such that sometimes, just at the turn of the tide as it were, the detractor, by a well-timed word, gets

the best of it. There was once a sufficiently meritorious comedy called "Sancho Panza," produced in Paris, as *Ménage* tells the story. At the close of the third act the Duke in the piece yawns, and says, "I begin to get tired of Sancho." "Egad, so do I!" said a wag in the pit, taking his hat up, and walking out; and that word and action settled the fate of the comedy. All the house joined in the laugh and the yawn, and the play (in theatrical phraseology) was damned. More than one meritorious author has been sneered out of public favour rather because he had a queer name than for any thing else. There is Mr. Amos Cottle, for instance, who was by no means a fool.

"Oh, Amos Cottle! Phœbus! what a name
For endless ages to hand down to Fame!"

sneered Lord Byron; but Cottle no more deserved to be sneered at for his name than his lordship to be blamed for his lameness. The whole question of names is curious; and, if Mr. Cottle could have been born a Howard, a Plantagenet, or a Percy, perhaps he would have so chosen. There is an author of the present day who may have written platitudes, but has certainly never written any thing vicious, while he has written much that is incentive to good; yet he has been sneered down systematically, partly because he possesses a somewhat comic name, which looks funny in a clever article. And directly one of the sneerers began to attack him, as he was not very big, all the others followed,

until the public has at last begun to believe against its own belief, and to abandon an old favourite.

There is some comfort, even to a wise and reflective man, to know that the sneerers punish themselves ; but it is small comfort to think that there are so many of them that the age has sensibly deteriorated in generosity within these few years. The young men some fifteen years ago used to believe in generous impulses, in the advance of the masses, in progress, and a grand future. They would patiently sit out even the turgid love-poetry of Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton, and believe in innocence and beauty. But now-a-days the young man has grown cunning. All he has to say is, "Not for Joseph," with a sly wink ; *he* knows too much, or affects to know too much, for his compeers ; and when the deeds of a hero or the self-sacrifice of a patriot are mentioned to him, all that he wants to know is, "How much did he get by it ?" "What will it pay," is his question, rather than what is right ; and thus biased, not by principle, but by results, he is just the man to believe in the veneered cleverness of a tribe of writers who think to raise themselves by depressing others. For proof of this we have only to read some of the smart essayists of the day, who place the title of some virtue or good quality at the top of their essay, and descant upon it only to prove that it does not exist.

Were we to consider the matter deeply, we might lose

temper about it. Sneering is so far from being clever, that it encourages the most detestable of vices. Sir R. Maltravers remarks, that "it is a corroding cancer most destructive to human happiness, and it shortens human life. Lawyers, players, and politicians, are much subject to it;" and he might have added, small poets, writers of books, artists, architects, and all whose works are more public than others'. When a man is very great indeed, his merit beats down some opposition; but what it beats down is the openly-expressed envy, not that which is secret and most harmful. With nations—for with them it exists—it is the cause of war, having been first its pretext; with individuals, it is the cause of "envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness," from which in our Litany we heartily pray, "Good Lord deliver us!"

We have said before that it is some comfort to a wise man, who never rejoices in the evil of any one, to know that these sneerers come to grief themselves, and, like the priests of Baal, howl vigorously to their false gods in vain: for envy, bad in most things, is good in this, that it sorely torments the man who indulges in it. We can read in letters and pamphlets, still extant, the mean jealousy of the smaller poets, who sneered at Shakspeare as a "Johannes Factotum, the veriest Shake-scene in all the country, a fellow who would do you whole *hamlets* of plays;" and we know, as certainly as if we had his

doctor's certificate, that the jaundiced passion made the poor wretch pale and miserable, and made him, as he says, lament for "his groat's worth of wit bought with a pound's worth of repentance." Happily, in the greatest of poets we have no record of this mean spite. We do not find him sneering at anything; his creations bear some of his divine soul in them, and look upon the blundering, ignorant constables with a pitying good-humour too noble and too open for a sneer. But he—even he—bursts out into a flame of declamation against the detractors of a great man:—

"Now I feel

Of what coarse metal ye are moulded,—*envy*.

How eagerly ye follow my disgraces,

As if it fed ye! and how sleek and wanton

Ye appear in every thing may bring my ruin!

Follow your envious courses, men of malice—"

The good man, therefore, must rejoice to think how much the envious man misses of the good of this world, knowing as he does that when the sun shines and the weather is charming, the envious fellow is unhappy within because of another's success, and will not enjoy the good around him, because others are, as he fancies, enjoying more pleasure than he.

Again, while the sneering critic detracts from a man, he at the same time adds to him, since envy is as much the compliment to greatness and merit as imitation is

a proof of real admiration. If, as the chained eagle Napoleon would have it when he was chained and ill, the Duke of Wellington was no general, and that all his victories were merely lucky hits, is it likely that he would have stooped to constantly malign and criticize his actions?

No one who tries to raise himself to something better than he has been, but will try and root out that common itch of ill nature, so general at present, and so noxious in a family. It is a vice easily fallen into; a young fellow says a bitter thing to his sister, and makes the girl turn red and cry, and he feels his weight. Then he tries his hand somewhere else, until he finally sets up, after leaving a vinegary reputation, and being thoroughly hated at his college, for a critic. And a nice time he has of it. Criticism is not like Rosherville, exactly the place to spend a happy day, or life, in. No one is so soon forgotten as a critic. He makes an actor's or an artist's reputation, and he is forgotten and unknown himself. The very men he has served neglect him when their name is made. The reputations he tries to kill survive him, and the poor fellows whom he stabs, not knowing their assailant, write to thank him for his kind assistance. Thus even the most effective envy punishes its user.

As a shadow, when visible, is a proof of the existence of a brighter light, so the attraction of envy and bitter

words may be taken as a proof of merit. This may console the individual. General detraction, which is a safe way to indulge in sneering, does not, however, admit of such consolation. It is an ill-bred, ill-natured and nurtured vice this. Its general capacity gives it a very frequent particular application; it raises jealousy, and poisons honest, simple natures.

The general sneerer detracts from the general stock of goodness, or renders it negative, which is the same thing; and in his Book of Proverbs, Solomon declares such a spirit to be "rotteness to the bones." Such can exist, not only in the mind of a man, but in the feelings of a generation. With such a spirit nothing is fair, no one is wise, no one is good; there is a speck in every fruit, a flaw in every fair glass, alloy in the purest gold. It laments over prosperity, sickens at the sight of health, shuts its eyes to all beauties. And thus, with half-shut eyes, with a soul squatting somewhere in his body, the envious man sits at home, doing little but breaking some poor spider's web, which the busy insect as industriously remakes.

But he who would build up the better self, who is wise and generous, opens his heart not only to the fairness of noble and beautiful things, but even to search for the soul of goodness in things evil; while the great soul, by the light shining within it, at last finds that all things

have their place and all their beauties, and that as knowledge and patience grow, so the certainty of the triumph of good grows too, and with it trust in God and faith in man.

From such bright sunlight envy slinks abashed, and the sneer wounds not, while the wise man smiles as he reflects : the ambitious man may gain power ; the proud man satisfaction, luxury, and gluttony, a fugitive and animal pleasure ; the miser may joy in the brightness of his gold ; but the envious man reaps nothing but vexation.

XI.

DISCONTENT AND GRUMBLING.

CLOSELY allied with envy, so closely that one always accompanies the other, is discontent. To grumble and get on is supposed to be the natural course of an Englishman's way in the world; and he certainly is in this respect a living contradiction, in that, not being a very vocal and limber-tongued person, he does a great deal of grumbling. We are told that we are a nation of grumblers, at the same time that we are certainly a people which has the utmost appreciation of silence. In what other nation would the German proverb, ("Silence is golden, speech is silver")—which Carlyle has made his own—have taken root and spread, but in ours? What other people would have gladly welcomed the assertion that they were inarticulate and dumb, awaiting the "eternal silences?" With what pathos does the poet's appeal touch us—

"A beggar that is dumb, you know,
Deserves a double pity!"

For what charity are we warmer, than for that which looks especially after the deaf and dumb? Who have taken such care of "dumb" animals, as instituting hospitals for lost dogs, but the English? What nation save ours would have welcomed the graceful phrase of Lord Mansfield—"Not the brute creation, but the mute creation." How struck we are with the fact that certain prisoners will not plead, but mysteriously "stand mute"—mute for ever in history, and solving no question! How we love certain persons who figure in our national records after the fashion of "William the Silent" and "Single-Speech Hamilton!" And with what devotion an English constituency clung to the member of Parliament who had served them faithfully in the House of Commons for twenty-five years, doing able work on committees, and who yet, metaphorically speaking, had never opened his mouth!

It may be taken as a fact, then, that the English and Scotch really do admire silent people. It is an old love that they have. And with few exceptions silence is a very admirable thing. The old Roman said truly—

"Sæpius locutum, nunquam me tacuisse poenitet ;"

for, often as we may regret our spoken words, it is but seldom that silence gives us pain. But it has its good side—and a very fine side that is—and its bad side, which is about as dreadful as the other is beautiful, so that it cannot

always be adhered to as a rule in life. We will not go the length of Shakspeare, who tells us that—

“Silence is only commendable
In a neat’s tongue dried and a maid not vendible ;”

but we must say that it is not always to be practised. We cannot put down a hard and fast line for specific silences, as if we were monks of La Trappe, or pupils of Pythagoras, undergoing one’s five years’ term of probation. It is curious how often human nature has reverted to this vow of silence. The disciple of Brahma, the Pythagorean, the Monk, and the Quaker, equally betook themselves to silent meditation. To this day the Quakers are the most silent of all people, and have a good sound rule in their churches, to keep silence before they speak, or admonish, or pray. It is said that during one of these awful silences the wicked and witty Tom Brown entered a meeting-house, and cried, “Hallo! here’s a penny tart for the first who opens his mouth.” “Young man,” cried an indignant and most venerable elder, “young man, why——” “The tart’s yours!” said the wit, bestowing on him the article, and quickly making his exit. Here the Quakers were at a disadvantage, because they did not disregard the insulting offer—speech was but silver there; but, in respect of another Quaker episode, related by Charles Lamb, the case was different. Three Friends on a stage-coach journey, after having eaten a large

luncheon, objected, just as the coach was about to start, to the charge. "Friend," said the eldest to the landlord, "I make thee a legal tender," holding out a shilling instead of half-a-crown. The other Quakers did the same ; but Boniface wished their shillings in a place where they would probably melt—he would not take the coin. The first Quaker said nothing, but, looking on his friends, pocketed his shilling, and walked in silence to the coach. His companions did the same. Lamb, half a Quaker himself, followed their example, and, all having gravely ascended, they were shut in and whirled off. Nor was the silence broken for a mile or so, when the eldest asked, gravely, "Friend, what was the price of corn at —— market?" Here the silent ones had the best of the bargain, and it is but just to set one story against the other.

In half of the events of life we may safely assert that people are given to say a great deal too much ; and the terrible waste of time, of ideas, of power, of vitality, by this unceasing gabble, is to be deplored. The marvel is that these gossips will themselves own that little or no good comes of it, and that they often repent of a hasty word, but never of a discreet silence. With some persons—not only of the female sex—there is a rage for "talk" which amounts to a mania—a persistent intention to say something, no matter what—a kind of hen-like love of cackling, a determination of words to the mouth, which can only be looked

at as a disease. There are those who indulge in incessant gabblements till they die. It is true that the power of holding one's tongue is not given to all of us ; nor is it held at all periods of our lives. A pretty good rule as regards talking would be only to speak when one has really something to say, and then to say it in as few words as possible. The general complaint is that there is too much said, and too much written. Tacitus, the historian, is said to have cut his cloth too narrow to clothe his thoughts, so that one has to guess at his meaning. There are few writers now-a-days who resemble Tacitus, and still fewer speakers. It is not the man who says much, but the man who talks wisely, who is listened to ; the word in season which we are told is so "good" is only good because it is in season ; even sorrow, which is usually loquacious and voluble enough, becomes respectable and even venerable when silently borne. It may be all very well to cry out at first—some natures must do so ;

"Give sorrow tongue—the grief that will not speak
Whispers the o'erfraught heart and bids it break."

In short, in nine-tenths of the world's affairs there is not only, as the nigger has it, "nuff sed," but a great deal too much said. Our passions are run to tatters, our trials are made ridiculous by being exaggerated, our vices are magnified rather than concealed, and our virtues disappear under the flowery covering of our speeches. If you want

to make a man hated, praise him ; if you wish to excite the world's envy, talk about him. If you had wished to make the patriarch Job himself—in the midst of all his sorrows—contemptible, you would have published a daily bulletin of his sufferings, and, by the time such a method had been but half carried out, the man of many troubles would have become a bore to everybody.

We must not forget one use of silence, which is, it seems to us, diabolical. It is when one holds an important secret which might save a life, or clear up a mystery, and dies with it, or so holds it that the person to be annoyed, who is generally a husband, is ready to “burst” with suppressed curiosity. This sort of silence is a terrible weapon in a wife's hands, and in general life occasions more and more talking as time elapses. A soft answer turns away wrath, and when a wife or a husband is irritated there is nothing like letting a subject drop. Then silence is indeed golden. But the silence persisted in—as by the lady in the old comedy, who, in reply to her husband's, “For Heaven's sake, my dear, do tell me what you mean,” obstinately keeps her lips closed—is an instrument of deadly torture. And what a clatter such a foolish silence makes in history ! Shall we ever hear the end of the controversy as to who was the Man with the Iron Mask ? Many persons must have known the wretched man, and yet they let future ages “burst” with curiosity about it. Then, again, there is that

anent Perkin Warbeck, as to the virtue (?) of Mary Queen of Scots, as to the meaning of the last word of Charles I., "Remember," as to who wrote Junius, and as to Lord Byron's most dreadful story, upon which, as Doctor Lushington, dying lately, made no sign, there will every now and then arise a doubt. In each of these cases silence was by no means golden.

The grumblers are a widely different race compared to the silent. They are eloquent persons, whose rhetoric is generally employed in telling the world of their own wrongs. And it is astonishing how small these wrongs are, what atoms magnified, and what out-of-the-way things a man will grumble about. Let us own readily enough that it is man who is the chief grumbler, and that his troubles are often of the smallest ; and it by no means follows that the man who cries out the loudest is the most hurt. Nor with the habitual grumbler or the hypochondriac has the fact that the troubles complained of do not properly belong to him anything to do with it. When Sterne met poor sick Doctor Smollett on his travels, the author of *Roderick Random* was in a bad humour with the world, in failing health, much troubled with many cares, and it suited Sterne to picture him as "Smelfungus"—for Smollett had been a critic, and such persons have few friends. "Smelfungus," says Sterne, "had been the grand tour, and had seen nothing to admire ; all was barren from Dan to Beersheba ; and when I met him

he fell foul of the Venus de Medici, and abused her ladyship like a common fish-fag. 'I will tell it,' cried he—'I will tell it to the world!' 'You had better,' said Sterne, with caustic bitterness, 'tell it to your physician.'" Now, what had the Venus de Medici to do with the grumbler? He saw little beauty in her, and all the world saw a great deal. Why, then, trouble about the matter? A wise man would have been silent, but every small hair frets and irritates a too sensitive skin. If we really confined our own thoughts to what concerned us, or would without doubt benefit others, we should have little to grumble at—that is, if it were possible to a grumbler to regard anything as little or great. On the contrary, such a one would put a drop of the clearest water beneath a microscope, and find something in it to grumble at; or he would grumble because his hair was dark and not light, or *vice versa*, or because he was not an inch taller or shorter. King Alphonso of Castile is said to have grumbled because God Almighty did not consult him when he made man, and has left it on record that if He had done so we should have had many things altered for the better.

So universal is the practice, that it has been more than once said that, if half-a-dozen men—Englishmen of course—are found seated comfortably together in their club window in Pall Mall, or behind the red-latticed window of a public house, and they seem quiet and cozy, one may assert, without

fear of contradiction, that they are grumbling. In five cases out of ten, perhaps, when William talks confidentially to his Mary between whiffs of his cigar, or after tea with his pipe, he is also grinding away at that Englishman's organ, a grumble. He is unfolding for the hundredth time to that sweet and matronly bosom the fact that the world has not done half as well by him as it has by Tom and George, who came out of the same nest as he did, or hailed from the same county. "And you, my dear," he will say, throwing a lump of sugar into the bitter cup to stimulate his wife's interest—"look at you, and at Brown's wife, and see what she has to wear!"

As a rule—God bless them for it—the wives sympathize with their husband's grumble, and are entirely of opinion that their William is a somewhat ill-used man, and has not had his deserts. It is very beautiful and natural this, provided it does not go too far. It makes man and wife more friendly, and knits them together; and it may be said safely enough that a man's wife really knows more of his merits than anybody else, how patiently he has worked, how good, clever, and suggestive he is, how upright and honourable. The fault of the matter is that in the matrimonial grumble, women sometimes forget that the man they admire is perhaps not one generally liked. As a rule, it generally strikes us, and our wives too, that Smith, Brown, Jones, and Robinson have been amply rewarded, and that Fortune has passed over our

heads alone. If they have failed, we know why; if they get into a mess, they deserve it; if they achieve fame and a fortune, we wonder at their "luck." But what we grumble at is, that they do it and not we; and, on the other hand—happy and beautiful thought!—they look over on our side of the hedge, and grumble, perhaps, because their potatoes are not coming up so well as ours. At the same time, it is, as has been frequently remarked, astonishing how easily we bear any misfortune that may happen to Jones—which is, indeed, only paralleled by the ease with which Jones bears that which happens to us. We have been told that it is somewhat cruel to beat a cripple with his own crutches, but it is what we all do when we say to a man who has fallen, "Ah, I told you so; I thought you would drop!" We never grumble when Brown falls and breaks his leg, except he should be carrying a basket of our eggs; but we are much concerned, and take a turn at our domestic organ, if any person treads, even lightly, on our toe.

The men who grumble belong to every class, and generally, the more a man has the more discontent he shows. He is higher up the ladder, and sees more of the view, and still struggles to get at that which is beyond; while those on the ground seem to be well content if they can ever get a glimpse of the landscape. Hence it is that there is more real content among the poor than among the rich; indeed—

"Poor and content is rich, and rich enough."

But, of all grumblers, the ambitious man in a high position, and with really great talents, is—if he be not a philosophic angel—the greatest grumbler. We must remember that it was Alexander the Great who cried because he had no more worlds to conquer, and Hannibal who rushed over the Alps and fell upon Italy when he could have more securely defended his country at home. So, in our time, our captains and military men, our clergymen and authors, and even our musicians and painters, are great grumblers. And so it is with all men whose labour is hard but spasmodic, and who have leisure to think. Add to this, that the people of whom we write belong to professions where the idea of promotion is held out pretty fairly and pretty constantly. The clergyman flatters himself that he would be more useful in a certain sphere; the military man, that if he only had a chance he could win battles, and have, like Nelson, a *Gazette* to himself; the painter, musician, and author, ask why their works are not appreciated as well as those of their fellows—why they are not “hung on the line,” or, after working for many years, why they may not preach to the world from the columns of the *Times* or the *Quarterly Review*, as from those of the *Little Pedlington Gazette*. Perhaps we ought to honour this kind of grumbling; we cannot have zeal without it. Man is not yet an angel, and unless he takes interest in what he does, what he does will not be worth having. And, after all, a gentle continuous grumble is an

occupation to an active mind, and is not so very unpleasant. Let the grumbler keep himself within bounds, and we shall be content to listen to him; for a man is always seen at his best when mounted on a pyramid of his own wrongs. Even poor little Hodge and Ginx's Baby tell their sombre stories with a certain amount of pleasure to us when they feel that the stagnant pool of their lives has been stirred by a good grumble. But the boundless, constant grumbler is generally a braggadocio, and too frequently a nuisance, who should be preached at by a raw curate until he has confessed to his weakness and done penance—on the silent sort—for his wicked discontent.

XII.

THE LUXURY OF WOE.

How is it that woman so often takes refuge in tears, and assuages her grief with a good fit of crying, and man holds it to be a shame to be seen to weep? How is it, again—for on some subjects we can put a century of questions—that woman gains beauty by that which distorts the face, and assumes a power by that which is held to be a weakness? How is it, again, that in theatres, where the business of gaily dressed actors is to excite emotion and to practise their powers upon our feelings, we men who go purposely to see a tragedy, to be terrified, appalled, touched with tender grief, yet deny ourselves the pleasure of weeping, and are ashamed if the tears rise to our eyes? We laugh as much as we like, and crow like babies, or “guffaw” like baboons at a silly, stupid farce; but we are ashamed, at least the majority of us, at crying. And yet he who can feel joy or merriment, and not grief, is but an imperfect being. Unless he can run up and down the whole gamut of feeling, he is little worth: he is an imperfect man. It is just as natural to

exhibit grief as to exhibit joy. But a long time ago poets felt tears to be a weapon of woman only, and sentimental poets have found it necessary to apologize for the soldier who, bidding good-bye to the scenes of his childhood, "leans upon his sword and wipes away a tear."

There can, however, be but little doubt that women love tears much more than men, and this they do naturally, and without calling for any aid from fashion. Madame de Flahaut, writing of people in high life, says that "there are certain women who have so explored the emotional that they rather love to nurse a misery than to enjoy a tranquil situation;" and Dickens, writing of low life, has pictured, with admirable fidelity, a certain Mrs. Gummidge, a "lone, lorn widow," who is always weeping and referring to her lost husband, and indulging in the luxury of woe. Of course, such a woman only exhibits her selfishness; but such women care little about *that*. If they can only persuade the world that they are patterns of constancy they are delighted, and in doing so they at least gain a pleasing sensation of their own trouble, of the enormity of their sorrow, and feel indeed a singular pride in being so unhappy. It is very possible that much of the feeling may at first be real; but time, which to all natural people brings the gentle anodyne of forgetfulness, has no effect upon them. They nurse their sorrow, and are always ready to call up their wrongs in a manner which to us seems unwise and unwomanly. When a woman is left

[a widow we all of us know that she has a sorrow greater than a widower has.] Unprotected, lonely, without the aid she looks for, without the manly voice to cheer her, the judgment to direct her, the strong, manly arm to help, and the brave, open sense of man to put things right, and to face the difficulties of a cruel world,—the woman must feel all this. The better wife, and the better loved wife, she has been, the greater will be her intensity of feeling; but it should follow that the more she feels this, the less open expression she will give to it. The woman who is always referring to her loss, takes out of the world her payment and her consolation for that loss. Whatever her station in this world, she has duties to perform, and she should confine her grief to her chamber, and seek her consolation from Heaven. If she neglects these merely to keep herself for ever in weeds, and continually to parade her grief before the world, we may depend upon it that the world will doubt her grief and question the source of those tears which are so prominently and even theatrically kept flowing.

And truly the world has some reason to doubt. Very few of us like sorrow, and some people think its exhibition an impertinence. Montaigne was of this opinion. "I neither like it in myself," says he, "nor admire it in others; and yet generally the world is pleased to honour it with a particular esteem, endeavouring to make us believe that wisdom, virtue, and conscience shroud themselves under

this grave and affected appearance." This may be so with the French, who are fond of sentimental sorrow and tears, but it certainly is not so with us, externally a graver, but mentally a much merrier and more humorous people. Tears also seem to be more easy and natural with Celtic nations—indeed, with any who are easily excited to laughter, and are subject to sudden fits of depression; but that there is always something conscientious or honourable in them, our notions forbid us to think. With two grave and warlike peoples, the Greeks and Romans; with the Danes and the Teutons; and especially so with the tribes of the North American Indians, it was considered a mark of effeminacy and worthlessness for a man to cry.

Moreover, it must be borne in mind that tears are as a rule no great proof of deep feeling. Actually, they are an expression of the subsidence of the extreme emotion; and this is very finely illustrated in Tennyson's plaintive ballad, "Home they brought her warrior dead." The wife is struck speechless, motionless, with sorrow; and the cry is that she must weep or she will die, and at last the tears are brought forth in this wise:—

"Rose a nurse of ninety years,
Set his child upon her knee—
Like summer tempest came her tears—
'Sweet, my child, I live for thee!'"

Not only do physiologists know this well, but the poets,

who know nature by intuition, have long since told it to the world. "Light cares speak out; the stronger ones are dumb," says the Latin proverb, in a line of Catullus; and the poets feign that the miserable mother, Niobe, having occasioned the anger of Apollo, had seven sons, and as many daughters, slain by the arrows of the sun-god; and thereon, hardened by woes, a statue of despair, turned into stone. "In a battle near Buda," says Montaigne, who is determined that the Grecian mythology shall not alone tell the sad stories, "a knight was particularly taken notice of for his singularly gallant bearing in an encounter. He was unknown, but performed great deeds of valour, and was highly commended by all, and lamented when left dead on the spot, but by none more than by a German count, who was infinitely enamoured of so rare a valour. The body was brought off, and the count, with the common curiosity, came to view it; and the armour was no sooner taken off than he knew the dead man to be his own son—a thing that added a second blow to the compassion of all beholders; he only, without uttering a word, or taking away his eyes, stood fixedly contemplating the body, till, the vehemence of sorrow having overcome his spirit, he sank down stone dead to the ground."

This is a beautiful story, and it is simply told; it speaks of a grief far "too deep for tears," an emotion which "whispered the o'er-fraught heart and bade it break," a

sorrow which was silent in its intense depth, and deep in its silence. It is doubtful whether women often feel such strong sorrow; if they do, it of course kills them; but Nature seems to have given them a nervous system which, being more easily acted upon, more readily relieves them. Tears are at any rate to be looked on, not as proofs of very deep, or rather of the deepest, grief, but as a gracious relief from the killing intensity of such grief.

(Some women can cry whenever they desire to do so, and make use of tears as an engine of great power.) But Madame de Staël thinks, and wisely too, that “it is a question, whether women are not wrong to work upon men by their tears, and thus, as it were, to make strength the slave of weakness;” but she adds that “where they do not fear to employ that means, they almost always succeed—at least for a time.”

Yet, surely it is only for a time that men are conquered by weakness. That they do not care to see grief openly expressed is a common fault—a fault owned by very brave men, who, for the most part, are tender-hearted. When grief is open and loud, half the men who witness it will do all they can to assuage it, as beggars and certain rogues well know, who train up children to drop a box of lucifer matches, and then to cry at the loss. Eagerly the good-natured citizen gives his penny to make good the wretched stock-in-trade; but he is not often thus to be taken in. A

too easily crying woman, one who is always as ready to melt as a lump of salt in a shower of rain or a ball of snow in the sunshine, a sound man rightly detests. He thinks that, although poets speak with rapture of the tear, and Lord Byron writes—

“So bright the tear in Beauty’s eye
Love half regrets to kiss it dry,”

it loses all its charm in frequent repetition. And that kissing away of tears, too, a Briton would hold to be a very simple folly and unmanly weakness, while a Frenchman will rave at beauty’s tears. “*Ciel!*” cries Alphonse, “*des larmes!*” And he cries himself, slaps his pale forehead, and kisses away the salt drops as if they were nectar; while the English sailor, feeling just as and even more deeply than the French lover, cries out that he should only “like to catch his lee scuppers running over.” This emotionalism seems natural to the French. Madame de Sévigné, writing to her daughter, describes the death of the hero, Marshal Turenne, from an eye witness: “Shot down, the hero opened two great eyes twice, and then his mouth, and then shut them for ever. His captains round him cried and wept, and the little d’Elbœuf threw himself on the body in an agony of tears, and fainted with crying. . . They carried the body to a coach, and then to his tent; and it was there that M. de Lorges, M. de Roye, and many others, thought that they would die with weeping.” No

doubt the great man was beloved ; but surely the silent grief felt by English soldiers at the deaths of Sir Philip Sidney, of Sir John Moore, and of Picton, is more to be commended ; at any rate, it is more natural to us. To the Americans, on the contrary—a great people, who seem to have acquired much of the vivacity of the French, and to adopt their fashions, as if they were impelled by climate to be nearer to the Gaul than the Briton—that easiness of crying, that fatal facility of tears, seems natural. When Mr. (afterwards General) Sickles was tried for the murder of his wife's suspected paramour, although there was neither doubt on the part of the jury, nor denial on that of the accused, he was acquitted by a jury so impressed by the fervid and *ad captandum* eloquence of the counsel, that they all burst into tears ; and the emotion was so catching, that the reporters say there was not a dry eye in the court. This may have been pity, but certainly it was not law. The ancients, who forbade sensational appeals, and especially the appearance of a woman in tears before the tribunal, were quite right. In our courts, all one-sided expression of feeling is rigidly forbidden. Justice should be calm, and blinded with her bandage : certainly it is not graceful for her to be seen with a tear in her eye.

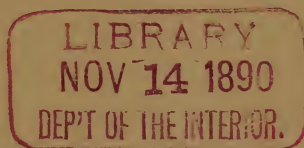
The value or the worth of tears, then, has to be weighed, as does everything in this world. We see that women shed them more easily than men, and certain nations more easily

than others. One man thinks it a proof of cowardice, another a luxury, to indulge in woe. One man emotionally excited even by wine will weakly pity himself till he is "crying drunk;" another, with a dull determination, will speak of his wrongs without emotion, or with merely a dumb grumble. Some women will use tears as an engine of power, will weep over their sick cat, their lap-dog, their bird, their own petty losses; others reserve their tears to assuage deep griefs. As a rule, very soft hearts are, if one goes a little further with them, very selfish hearts, and are easily moved, as a shallow stream is easily rippled by the wind; but they are not deep enough to be dangerous. Still, there is a grief

"————— which burns
Worse than tears drown,"

says Shakspeare; and another of his characters says manfully, "Weep I cannot, but my heart bleeds." Ovid, who has given us more axioms than most other poets, says pointedly that tears, at times, have all the weight of words; yet, as a rule, a man had better look upon tears scientifically—as a natural safety-valve given us to prevent any danger of explosion. Give Grief words, let her speak loudly, and all will be well. The silent sorrow kills. The baby who will not cry chokes itself with its passion; he who bawls loudly improves his lungs and grows stronger. Long before chloroform, or any of those anæsthetics which have been dis-

covered and given to the world, those pain-destroyers which make the surgeon's art not half so dreadful as it was, the doctors used to tell the men to cry out under the knife, for Nature in this expression had given man a way out of his pain, and an anodyne which some say is better than any drug in the world. Thus one torment banishes another; and thus God, mindful of man's weakness, gives him the tear which heals his sorrow, while it softens his fellow's heart.



XIII.

GRIEVANCES.

To over delicate feelings there naturally fall a number of troubles duller persons usually escape—they are so sensitive ; moreover, this is an age of grievances and of strikes. We are each of us so badly off that our burdens have worn quite “a hole in our back.” There never was an age half so badly used. Our fathers and mothers never went through a quarter of our troubles. As for our grandfathers and grandmothers, they lived in a paradise of fine gentlemen and ladies, balls, routs, drums, and all that made life sweet. And really, if we look at the portraits by Sir Joshua Reynolds and Gainsborough, and mark the placid faces and unruffled minds therein shown, we shall be inclined to agree with the grumblers of the present day.

The world is full of unquiet souls. We are all something like Blanche Amory in Mr. Thackeray’s “Pendennis,” who chronicles her woes in a little volume entitled “Mes Larmes !” and we exclaim with that affected young lady,

"Il faut avoir des émotions." So that, as an exquisitely adjusted balance must swing evenly from one side to another, we may presume that the soul of man, if it does not break out in gratitude, will do so in complaint. No class is free from this plague ; and really it would seem as if our education had of late years omitted to instil endurance. "Endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ" is a text which has given way to the more worldly apophthegm, "Grumble and get on." From the top of the tree to the bottom, there is much the same cry : the private wishes to be an officer, the subaltern a captain, the captain a general. Perhaps there is not a class in the world so thoroughly dissatisfied as military and naval officers. They thrive best, of course, in war, and—small blame to them !—are pleased when men of peace are dismayed. It was a well-known hackneyed toast at Indian mess-tables when John Company held sway—"A bloody war or the yellow fever." Either one or the other might carry off the colonel, the major, or perhaps a senior captain or two. It is to be concluded that young officers vociferously applauded ; while the seniors, who had weakened constitutions and had gained their "steps," did not rap the table so heartily.

Let us "go downstairs" like Socrates, and see whether we can meet with more wisdom. These young soldiers have had their places won for them by their fathers' work, and are thoughtless : still, they are generous enough to

share both the war and the fever when they come ; but we shall find more wisdom with the workmen. They, we know, have their grievances. They call themselves "working-men," as if no one else worked. They have Unions to protect them, and combine together under the very shadow of the laws they too often set at defiance. They have a congress at Sheffield ; and thereat, on Saturday, January. 17th, 1874, they passed this resolution :—"The Congress is clearly of opinion that the Imperial revenues ought to be raised by direct levy on the annual value of realized property." Was there ever a more iniquitous proposal? A, a plasterer, saves his money and buys a house or land, or puts his money in a bank ; B, a carpenter, earns twice as much, but does not save, and spends all his income. A is to pay all the taxes, and B none ! Or, to illustrate it in another way, C, a clergyman's widow, lives on the savings of a lifetime : she has £200 a year. E, a literary Bohemian who has much talent, but also much laziness, dawdles away half his time, managing, however, to secure about treble the sum annually, which he spends on himself, his club, cigars, and drink. But the widow is to pay the taxes, and E to pay nothing ! Still, we must not be too severe on our friends ; it is a great step in their education that they own there should be an "Imperial" system at all.

Victor Hugo, in his "Année Terrible," a poem on the

year in which Paris was burnt, hits upon one of the reasons of the grievances of the lowest classes. Going along the street during the second terrible siege, the aged poet meets with a Communist, who informs him that he has just set fire to the National Library. "What!" cries the poet; "Burn Homer and Plato and Socrates; burn all the historians and poets—those who have given men wider hopes and better lives—those who have made discoveries and perished for liberty! What! Burn Galileo and Newton and Kepler, to whom the world owes science and so many discoveries! Burn those who make life merry and good—burn Rabelais, Molière, Lesage—burn Racine and Shakspeare—burn the preachers and moralists, and finally burn the Bible itself! Wretch, what have you done!" The man answers with a grin and an epigram, "*Je ne sais pas lire!*"—"I don't know how to read!" What could he know of the wide heritage of knowledge open to the poorest scholar? It is ignorance, after all, that gives point to our grievances and our grumblings. We complain that we have missed that fortune, lost that suit, have been made miserable by that failure. Did we know all, each of these troubles might prove to be a blessing in disguise. Wisdom and reflection will take the sharpest sting from our troubles if we only employ them.

But, allowing that education will scatter and disperse, as it has already done, many grievances, it must be first

conceded that the education needs to be religious and moral. To give a selfish and corrupt heart more knowledge is to give it more power to be mischievous. The small scholars who learn the rights of men must also learn their duties. The secularists who would banish such teachings are not reformers—they are revolutionists. That Mr. Bright has a grievance against England is very well known, but it is not so well known why. He has also an immense admiration for America; and he seems to regard most things done by England as wrong, and most things done or said against her as right. The Ashantee war is barbarous upon our part; and—hear this, ye who understand what the native savage African is—a creature of low intellect, used to surprises, stratagems, and lies all his life—Mr. Bright seriously proposes that we should employ “arbitration—say, as an arbitrator, the King of Holland”—between Ashantee and England! Well, we succeeded wonderfully in our other arbitration—we had to pay three millions because we believed a President’s proclamation that certain American States were belligerents. The Geneva Arbitration established the fact that as yet States are not advanced enough for such a method of settling international differences. Does any one suppose that France and Germany would have submitted their quarrel to arbitration? Would America, in her quarrel with Spain about Cuba and the “*Virginus*,” be arbitrated for? Do Mr. Bright and others

like him give unpalatable advice on purpose to quarrel with those who will not accept it?

As a general rule, we should advise persons to distrust, utterly irrespective of political considerations, all those, whether Tory, Whig, or Radical, who have a grievance against their country or their family. If they are not well there, they must be very unlucky, or they must be in fault. If they are unlucky, we are worldly enough to advise peaceable persons not to deal with them. And what is one's country but one's family? And, if we malign that, what are we?

“Breathes there the man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land?”

Is there any Englishman who does not love his land, ay, and trust her too?

Then why malign her? With Mr. Arch travelling to Canada (Britain's eldest daughter and best representative), and telling English peasants what has been told them for twenty years—that, in ten cases out of the dozen, they are best off at home—with the experience of the Brazil emigrants before us, and of Mr. Dickens, and the deadly swamp he pictures in America—why should “our friends with a grievance” always abuse England? Why should the working-men, whose masters and whose masters' fathers are and were workers, talk about oppression, and that men

cannot rise in this country? Why should these old lies repainted have power to move our English folk? Simply because lies will have power; they sift and stir men, and the bad ones yield. Two men, very different, and of different creeds, gave utterance to two opinions which meant the same thing, and which it is well sometimes to remember. Mr. Caleb Cushing is credited with formulating in America the smart phrase, "Our country, right or wrong;" and Lord Denbigh, as is well known, said, "An Englishman, if you please; but, before all things, a [Roman] Catholic." Opposite as the expressions appear, they mean the same thing: they mean loyalty to the ship one sails in—don't scuttle that. We agree to the spirit of them with our whole heart. If one does not stick by one's home, one's hearth, one's country, to whom will one be true? To whom is one's tongue to be gracious, if it is constantly exposing the weakness of one's own mother? For ourselves, we are weak enough to be proud of being a Briton; and, if any one will find out that "brither Scot" who, when in Canada, imported some of his native turf, a mat for his feet, and a seat for his chair, and, sitting down, drank real Glenlivet to the old land, and felt his heart glow, because he was on his native soil, we will exchange photographs and "embrace" as brothers.

The best excuse for the grumblers is to suppose that they are out of health, and that the vile *melancholia*, or

black bile, of which old Burton has treated, is the source of their ill-temper. In perhaps eight cases out of ten, this charitable supposition is the true one. In a young ladies' school, superintended by one who knew a little of medicine, the young people who were not quick and smart with their lessons were stimulated with a dose of Gregory's powder—this we know as a fact—and improved health produced improved attention. It is well known, also, that John Dryden, who sat down to write tragedies in his best dress, prepared himself by a dose or so of medicine on the previous day. Another writer attributed his atheistic and discontented ideas to an undigested mutton chop. Putting these things together, we may endeavour to banish some of our grievances by keeping in sound health. We may send others flying by being prudent and wise. Personally, we seldom feel so bitterly ill-tempered as when we have done a foolish thing ; and others, no doubt, are like us.

Again, if we want to be successful and manly, and pleasant in life, when we have a grievance we must treat it as a weed, and pull it up. Great men do not have them. "What a crying shame it was," said Hazlitt, "that Milton got only thirteen pounds nine shillings and sixpence for 'Paradise Lost.' " "Not at all," answered Northcote ; "he did not write it for money. He had gained what he proposed by writing it—not thirteen pounds nine shillings and sixpence, but an immortal reputation." That answer of the

great artist was a noble one. "They don't ask you out," said an acquaintance to Dr. Johnson, "these great lords and ladies, like they do David Garrick." "No," said Johnson; "they don't like their mouths stopped, for they are great lords and ladies; besides, Davie amuses them." Here is the truth roughly told, but all the more poignant. When one can amuse in society, one can count upon being popular, and upon being "asked out." Who dined out so much as Sydney Smith, Tom Moore, and Theodore Hook? And why? Because they were the most brilliant men of the day, and a dinner-party was not a success without them. Sydney Smith's widow kept away from society long after her husband's death; at last she ventured. "How different it was!" she writes. "I could not believe a dinner could have been so dull."

(Men and women, too, receive in this life much of what they deserve. It is like a looking-glass, this big world; grin and smile to it, and it will smile back—scowl, and it scowls.) It is but a confession of one's own unpleasantness at home if we air our grievances. The nice people are not "nice" without a good deal of trouble on their part. That pleasant fellow who always cheers his acquaintances, and who carries an atmosphere of good nature about him, is probably a hero in his way, and most likely a good-natured philosopher, who takes a great deal of trouble to be what he is. That amiable sister, who never complains, has shown

in little things as much bravery as if she had won the Victoria Cross.

(On the other hand, those young persons who have always a budget of miseries to pour into the sympathetic ears of their friends, and who are totally, if they are to be believed, unappreciated at home, will be found, if looked into, not so amiable as they might be.) Mr. Tom Pinch, who never thought of himself, found even the gross hypocrite Pecksniff a good and kindly creature ; while Martin Chuzzlewit, who took care to sit in the very front of the fire, and liked to be read to sleep by Tom, discovered every one to be selfish. Depend upon it, if we try to think more of others than we do of ourselves, we shall seldom have a grievance. We may also rest assured that, if we will dwell upon our sweet selves, and our own merits, we shall doubtless believe those merits to be so great that we shall find the world will always supply an immense and ever-increasing grievance by being blind to them.

XIV.

DELICATE FEELINGS.

VERY sensitive persons are often very selfish, and very selfish persons are not unfrequently quite blind to their own defects. It is usual for them to deprecate any appeal to or any attack upon their feelings, and they talk as if many things done in life were done purposely to upset the delicate organisation they refer to. Sometimes this selfishness is very apparent, and the persons around are satisfied that there is a good deal of latent hypocrisy, or what the world succinctly terms humbug, conjoined to it. The reader will remember that the rogue Autolycus, in the *Winter's Tale*, thus appeals to his delicate and noble sensibility, in order merely to conceal for a time his robbery; for, after he has picked the clown's pocket as he lies grovelling on the ground and pretending to be wounded, he rejects any offer of money. "Dost lack any money? I have a little money for thee," says the clown, about to put his hand in his pocket. But Autolycus at once catches his hand and whines out, "No, good sweet

sir ; no, I beseech you, sir ; I have a kinsman not past three quarters of a mile hence, unto whom I was going : I shall there have money or anything I want. Offer me no money, I pray you ; that kills my heart." This appeal to the finer feelings of the clown effectually blinds him, and he does not discover his loss till the rogue has long gone out of sight.

Similar cajolery is practised every day. There is hardly a day passes but that one may see in the newspapers some appeal to the benevolent, wherein it is stated that a lady of high birth, an officer, or a clergyman, who dares not make her or his case known, has fallen into misfortune, and who desires to be relieved in a manner that will not "kill the heart," *i.e.*, hurt the feelings. By appealing to the mercy and compassion of the world--and the world has much more than many of us give it credit for--such persons get frequent and sometimes munificent relief. The Duke of Wellington, amongst his secret good deeds, which were numerous, once relieved "an officer's daughter," as she represented herself, for a series of five years. He made inquiries, but, though he never saw the lady, the plot was so cunningly laid that all suspicions were lulled, until at length, just as he was about to send her five pounds, as she said she was going into a hospital with a broken leg, the mendicity officer, having got hold of one of the Duke's letters, discovered that the "officer's daughter" was a man,

a practised begging-letter writer. To what extent the Duke had been played upon he never would confess ; but he often laughed heartily at the thoroughness of the deception, although he was very angry with the impostor at the time.

Really good and charitable people have work enough, if they are rich, for an almoner ; and the public has need indeed to protect its feelings, and, to prevent the robbery by rogues, good reason to support a "Charity Organisation" as well as a "Mendicity Society." The feeling of pity, if indulged indiscriminately and loosely, is a very expensive one to a generous man, and miserably harmful to the recipient of his charity. It is all very well to act the good Samaritan, but we who are told to be "wise as serpents" as well as "harmless as doves," should remember that the original good Samaritan, when he found his neighbour wounded and plundered, did not content himself with dropping his twopence into the half-closed hand, but bound up the poor sufferer's wounds, placed him on his own beast, took him to a place of refuge, and provided for him till he was well. "Many persons who love to indulge sentimental feelings only are," as Sydney Smith said with a sneer, "very ready to act the good Samaritan, but 'without the oil and the twopence.'"

There are some persons who indulge their feelings at others' expense, and who pity the convict when convicted and punished, quite putting out of sight the righteousness

of his sentence and the enormity of his crime. We find many of these philanthropists everywhere. Recently a woman in America, to whom a brutal murder and many other crimes were brought directly home, was acquitted by a jury and dismissed with a compliment. In our own country women who have made it their business to poison families by wholesale, or to kill a dozen children at least while carrying on a baby farm, have been pardoned—as to the extreme sentence—and maintained comfortably for life; and even while we write, two gentlemen of extremely liberal opinions—Mr. Jacob Bright and Mr. P. A. Taylor, the latter a prominent advocate of women's rights—have made themselves conspicuous by advocating the abolition of the recently imposed Act which permits the flogging in gaol of garotters and of all who use personal violence in highway robbery. Of all assaults—on account of its roughness, its brutality, its cruel results, and its cowardice—that of the *garotte*, or strangulation on the highway, is the most cruel, except perhaps that of deliberately kicking one's prostrate antagonist to death with shoes armed with tips purposely prepared. Its effect on the nerves is so serious that very many of the victims have died, and very many have been rendered invalids for life. One poor man whom we knew died, and the state in which he was brought home gave his wife such a shock, that she also succumbed, leaving two helpless orphans. The only

effective way to lesson these assaults was found to be the flogging of garotters under the superintendence of a surgeon, who, if they could not bear the lash and fainted, immediately stopped the punishment. But our philanthropists find the description even of such punishment too much for their feelings, and plead for the subjects of it: such treatment brutalises them. Brutalises them, forsooth! As if a professional garotter, who watches a poor man till he comes to a dark corner, and then twists a gutta-percha switch round his throat, could be brutalised! That the punishment is an effective deterrent is found in the fact that upon the Act being passed such assaults fell from forty in a season to four, and have since almost stopped. It is not ten years ago since a City tradesman invented a *garotte* collar—a steel apparatus with spikes, to prevent the possibility of the wearer being choked; yet now we find persons unwise enough to plead for the perpetrators of such crimes. We of course respect pity, sensibly and well directed, and above all we lament for those who fall into crime; but we must not allow pity, any more than any other feeling, to befool us. Our duty lies sometimes in the thorny and unpleasant path of severity, not altogether to be exercised towards the criminal, but to prevent others from being similarly misled through hope of escape with impunity, which is the great incentive to crime.

Amongst the “feelings” which are too often indulged

in a foolish way are those which we rightly reckon amongst the holiest in nature—those of a mother. As the sweetest wines make the sharpest vinegar, and from the most brilliant exotic flowers are distilled the most potent poisons, so our best good often becomes our worst evil; and the foolish indulgence of mothers—in nine cases out of ten for the sake of mere selfishness, however cunningly concealed from themselves—has perhaps done as much evil as any other cause—some persons say as all other causes—in the world. We remember that Mrs. Kenwigs, in Dickens's story, assembled her children, all nicely dressed, on one form for the admiration of her friends and gossips, and then burst into tears to "relieve her feelings," declaring that the little snub-nosed creatures were too beautiful to live. By that cunning contrivance the lady called the attention of her friends to her offspring, and so gratified her vanity. The eldest child, Miss Morleena, tried, it will also be remembered, the same "little game" on, with a difference, by going into hysterics in the baby's chair; but, finding no 'one to attend to her "feelings," she at once recovered, and made a violent assault on one of her little sisters, as an outlet to other pent-up "feelings." Here we may ask—unless we quietly console ourselves by assuming the "feelings" of women to be often mere vain expressions—how are we to account for the fact that "hysterics," as they were called, were once a very fashion-

able complaint, and that now they are seldom heard of? So also with fainting fits, which are marvellously less common, according to medical statistics, than they were twenty years ago. Some part of the cessation may be attributed to the smaller practice of tight-lacing, but a very large percentage of the fainting fits must be put down to the indulgence of "feelings."

Mothers who are always ready—as too many are—to marry their daughters without forethought, to push forward their sons recklessly, to get "any place" for their children, and greedily to take the very best, suitable or not, for their progeny, to secure the first place, the largest slice of cake, and other "goodies," are merely carrying out a distilled selfishness; and while they believe that they are exhibiting a mother's self-sacrifice, in reality they are merely shifting their method of self-pleasing. Take again the too common plea which mothers put forward for indulging their children; self-love tells them that they do this through the generosity born of true love, whereas what they do arises as much from want of judgment and discrimination as from due appreciation of justice. Again, many a mother, instead of properly punishing a child at the time of wrong-doing, refers all the unpleasant part of domestic rule to the father, who thus becomes the domestic tyrant, while the mother is looked upon as a pitying angel, her soft folly undoing all the good which the father's pun-

ishment might do. So, yet again, mothers believe that they are exhibiting the proper "maternal feelings" in keeping their children at home when they should send them forth into the world, where alone they can be taught the virtue of self-dependence. As Tennyson writes, in his *Gareth and Lynette*, it is simply ruin for an active young man to be checked by over-fondness—

"Prison'd and kept, and coax'd and whistled to—
Since the good mother holds me still a child,
Good mother is bad mother unto me !
A worse were better !"

The subject is an unpleasant one to us, and therefore we will say no more. The worst of it is, that neither we nor any one else will convince a foolish mother that, in pleasing her own selfishness, and in ruining her children, she is not doing her best, but rather her worst ; and if such a woman reads this, she will perhaps think the writer "a hard-hearted monster" for having dared to say what he has said.

We have heard a man described as a gentleman because his "feelings" would not permit him to carry a parcel, nor to work for his living, nor to pay his debts ; the pride which suggested to him the propriety of being very well dressed, wearing nicely made kid gloves, and a well-brushed hat, was left out of sight. Mr. Mantalini was a gentleman of this sort ; and there are ladies too who are content to starve and live but half a life throughout life,

so that they never do anything menial. Lord Salisbury, the other day, referred to this feeling when he assured his hearers that, because ladies would not enter into lower spheres, the clerk and the curate, the companion and the governess, have come to be paid much less than the skilled working-man, the mason who builds the wall or lays the coping, or the housekeeper who looks after one's household, and the cook who prepares one's dinner. Lord Salisbury is one who speaks with great authority, for he has himself for many years put his "feelings" very wisely in his pocket, and has shown us what such a nobleman should show us. Instead of idling luxuriously beneath the shadow of a grand title, this descendant of William Longwood, Earl of Salisbury, a great warrior, and in our heraldry "a high and mighty prince," has been serving on railway boards, proving himself a most efficient chairman, so that any great board would be happy to bow to his decision, and by a very high salary willingly secure his services. For such a long-descended nobleman, of as good birth as is the Queen herself, such service is as menial as for one true gentlewoman to manage the household of another. But of this we will say no more. Upon the new continents where our children and cousins will move more freely than we do, let us hope that honest work will be truly honoured, and that the "professions" will not be so much elevated above righteous trade.

It is a question whether feelings are natural ; that is, whether they arise spontaneously or are received. "We trust we have a good conscience in all things," says the apostle, with that marvellous spiritual prescience which anticipates the knowledge of the most learned. As Sterne has remarked in one of his curious and spasmodic sermons, the phrase is noticeable. "We trust ; surely we know ? Nay, hardly so." A certain conscience perhaps is inherent ; but the conscience of the African who would lie and steal from and poison the most affectionate of his pastors who had converted him, is a very different monitor from the conscience of that good missionary.

The greatest argument in respect of the inherence of our feelings may be found perhaps by reference to the lower creation. Take, for instance, fear, which is a nervous feeling so general all over the world that we cannot doubt but that it is inherent. What we call courage is but an absence of fear, and the greatest "braves" among the beasts are at the same time the most cowardly.

("That all men would be cowards if they dare,
Some men have had the courage to declare."

Courage, friendship, tenderness, maternal affection, revenge, anger, hatred, and other feelings may be traced in the behaviour of animals. Elephants remember injuries and benefits, and will resent the one and reward the other.

Horses and cats form attachments ; and of course dogs are not without their feelings. It is observable that no dog likes to be laughed at ; that he will show anger, remorse, and a great nervous disturbance if pointed at and ridiculed, and this without mentioning his name. If the name be spoken, of course his quick ear catches it : and it is not unnatural in the dog that he should watch and mark the various tones in which his conduct is debated ; thus the wise cur in the comedy, which walked downstairs to avoid being kicked down, is quite true to life, and any one may see that when a dog is looked at and laughed at he is not insensible to ridicule. Neither is he insensible to praise, nor in some measure to humour. And certainly what a dog feels a man feels. We can all agree with evolution so far, and we may each determine to spare the feelings of others when we can, and not indulge in them in too great an abundance ourselves. (One of the most unpleasant persons in a family is the one we do not know what to do with on account of the overplus of " feeling " she possesses)

XV.

THE PROPER TOUCH.

WHAT is most wanted by all of us at home and abroad, but perhaps most of all at home, is tact. The most skilful man will feel at times that he wants it, and the most persuasive will, by a moment's forgetfulness, lose a year's hard work.

This is an old story. Here is an old illustration. King Radbod was a most excellent Dane, and of an enthusiastic temper ; so that whatever he did, he carried with him his Court and his nobles—and it is needless to say his people. St. Vulfran, who had been sent from the Bishop of Rome, had got a footing in that Court, had converted many of the nobles, and had so far touched the king that he consented to be baptized. Upon a day appointed, therefore, the good saint prepared the font, and the king marched into the little church, with its communion table (for they did not dream of altars in those days of primitive honesty and simplicity), and surrounded by as many courtiers as could well squeeze in, he was received with a jubilant hymn by St. Vulfran and his missionary friars.

The king, depositing his crown in the hands of his attendants, put one foot in the font, and was about to accept the holy chrism, when he paused : he had a question to ask, and a loyal question too. "Vulfran," said he, "what do you say has become of that long line of ancestors of mine who ruled in this land before you came with your Gospel tidings, and who were never baptized?" Vulfran, a strict believer in regeneration—at that time, indeed, never disputed nor mooted—answered hastily : "Assure yourself of this, Radbod, that those unbaptized kings were not Christians, and are most certain'y damned."

Whereupon King Radbod drew his foot out of the font, and placing his crown upon his head, girded on his sword, and proudly swept away, saying : "For my part I would rather be damned with a long line of kings and warriors, than be saved with a few poor snivelling, shaveling monks." His courtiers withdrew with him. Vulfran was left with his *fratres* singing a hymn, and begging for help ; and that kingdom and its dependencies, its people and its neighbours, were lost for long years to Christianity, and therefore to light, civilization, piteousness, good faith, mercy to the poor, and all its attendant blessings. It was like putting back the sun ; for, sooner or later, all lands must come under this forerunner of light and knowledge.

Now what lost Vulfran this kingdom was not truth, for it is not true that those who have not heard of Christ are

damned ; nay, it is utterly contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, and is false. That by which he lost King Radbod has cost the Church thousands of souls,—want of tact ; and this want is, by anticipation, condemned by the great Head of the Church Himself when He says, “ Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves :” and perhaps want of tact has been more harmful to religion than anything else. People who believe that they are in possession of the actual truth, are not to be excused if they make that truth unattractive to those who have not arrived at their standpoint : even St. Paul rightly prides himself on his tact. He was all things to all men : not that he was a hypocrite, or ever shunned the truth or feared to declare it ; but he was a many-sided man. He felt where other men felt ; he put himself in their place ; in a word, he knew the proper touch ; and he knew the value of it.

And what is tact ? It is a little and important word, from the Latin *tangere*, to touch. It means a delicacy of perception, a knowledge of when a fact is arrived at. A good scholar derives the word from the French *tactique*, Italian *tattica*, and the Greek *τακτική*, *τάσσω*, I place in order ; which seems to us to apply more to the word “ tactics ” and its meaning, than to tact. Richardson says that “ tact is a modern word, frequent in conversation,” and quoting Lord Macaulay’s words, defines it as “ skill or adroitness in adapting (one’s self) to circumstances, and our

words to our deeds." It is all this, and a great deal more. It is the art of putting things adroitly. With tact you may with impunity tell the most sensitive person of the most terrible misfortune; without tact, such an announcement would knock the same person down, as a bullock is felled by a pole-axe. With tact a man makes a request for a favour, for a loan of money, for a place for his son, his daughter or his nephew, begs his son-in-law into a living or himself into a bishopric, and does all or any of these things with such absolute delicacy that he either succeeds, or makes the act of denial painful to him who performs it; without tact he muddles everything, he even begs the girl who loves him for her hand at the wrong time. He is always out of season. He makes a joke when people are exhausted with laughter; he ventures upon a melancholy remark just as people are tired of sadness and longing to laugh. He is the person whom Sydney Smith pictures as being himself square, and yet being always thrust into round holes. "We shall generally find in life," writes Sydney Smith, and it will be interesting to put this famous but rarely traced quotation rightly before the reader, "that the triangular person has got in the square hole, the oblong into the triangular, and a square person has squeezed himself in the round hole. The officer and the office, the doer and the thing done, seldom fit so exactly that we can say they were almost made for each other."

When we can say so, we may be assured that we have met a person of much tact, and of course of considerable knowledge : for tact consists as much in *Art* as in *Heart*, in a sensitive good nature, much perception, quickness, vivacity, and receptivity. To know what to say, and how and when to say it, argues a very considerable grasp of mind. To say the wrong thing, and to remember the right thing at the wrong time, is a fault of so general a character, that not only have Aunt Tabitha Bramble, Mrs. Nickleby, and a dozen other characters been built upon it, but in *Punch* Mr. Burnand has been carrying on a series of comic papers entirely on this theme, and these papers have grown into a volume which has gone into many editions. The fun of these "Happy Thoughts" consists in a dull and small-minded fellow's having what he considers happy thoughts always too late for use, simply because he wants mental quickness and tact. He always gets the worst in an argument or in a single combat of badinage or chaff ; he recollects the cutting rejoinder he ought to have made when it is five minutes too late. Happy thoughts of this sort are as useless as those

"——words congeal'd in Northern air,"

which Butler tells us of in "*Hudibras*": a vulgar notion, said to be prevalent in his time, that in Greenland words were frozen in their utterance ; and upon a thaw, as Chesterfield has it, "a very mixed and utterly incomprehensible

speech was heard in the air of all those words set at liberty." But of what use was the speech when there was nobody to hear it?

There are many persons born with tact, and many a child in years will prove that he has a very excellent and delicate perception. There are a dozen anecdotes to prove this ; but the contrary is the rule. Young people are often sadly wanting in tact, and are perpetually saying rude things. They are the *Enfans Terribles* of Gavarni, who always blurt out unseasonable, and sometimes most cruel sayings, one of the mildest of which is the reply to the grandfather who, patting a favourite grandson's head, says, "Ah, my good little boy, there will be something nice for you when I die." "Then I wish you'd die at once, grandpa." Old as a man may be, he does not like to be at once sent down into the damp earth—

"To lie in cold obstruction, and to rot ;
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod."

Even from the innocent mouths of babes and sucklings, loveable as they are, and much to be indulged, we do not like to hear such matter. How many a hatred has had its incipience and foundation in a sharp turn given by a child's prattle?

The tactics of life—by which we fight life's battle—are by far the most important. By them we measure our relative

strength, and conquer or fall. We set out, arrange, and put in order what we can do and what we can't do. A tactician must be a good mathematician ; he knows how to calculate distance, strains, and curves, the weight of the burden and the strength of the beam. If he is a wise man he never enters a battle without knowing it beforehand to be won. It was said of the Duke of Wellington that months before the Battle of Waterloo he had picked out the field of Mont St. Jean and its neighbourhood as the place where the battle would be fought. Certain events would force Napoleon to move upwards to the north of Europe ; certain others would incline his steps that way ; he would meet him there. He did meet him at the very spot, waited, pretended to be caught at the Duchess of Richmond's ball all the time his troops were taking up their position, hurried to their head just in time, and fought till the very last moment—hours after the appointed and proper time—till Blücher and night came. An immense issue hung upon the forecast and the tactics of the duke ; but, as he himself said, a good general chooses his own battle field. So it has been with all the great generals in the world, from the young Alexander to Marlborough, who was, perhaps, the finest general the world has seen since the Macedonian conqueror, and whose tactics were so admirable that he never had to fight a battle twice. His opponents were always indisputably beaten and utterly scattered by the measures he had taken beforehand.

Both in tact and tactics a man may overstep himself. In the former, it does not so much matter ; it is simply like playing with oneself for a guinea, and winning it. Some persons use tact where it is not wanted, and then it becomes *finesse*, and ceases to be tact ; some, too, artfully go beyond it, on purpose to come back gracefully, like the beau, who always re-entered the room on pretence of having left something, so that he might have an opportunity of again giving his most graceful bow. The Irish are great adepts at this, and say a dozen pretty things which apparently begin with rudeness : “ I am so ill, Kathleen, that I am nearly dead.” “ And indeed I wish you were quite, my lady ; for sure, if the body was dead, your soul would be sitting with the angels !” The surprise which such a compliment gives is pleasant even to the strongest intellect. This species of compliment is perhaps “ blarney,” but it goes a great way for all that. If the Irish were as stable as they are versatile and clever, we should not be troubling ourselves so much as we always are about that unhappy island. It is true that Mr. Huxley declares the English and Irish all to be of the same breed ; the natives of Tipperary to be as Teutonic as the natives of Devonshire. If so, the difference must lie in the climate of the two islands ; for certainly, for quickness and tact, the Irishman will beat the ordinary Englishman hollow.

It follows, then, that tact is not everything, but it is much.

It is that which gives a man a good start in life : it serves him at every pinch, places him forward in life, puts his most pleasing characteristics in the best light, and keeps his follies and defects in the background. In homely phrase, it teaches a man to put his best leg foremost. It may not be a very noble quality, since in fact it often saves people from the necessity of using noble qualities ; but it is a useful one, and must be possessed by those who have their way to make in the world. The want of it will ruin many a good man, and has ruined thousands. Tact may be born with a man, but it may also be acquired. We generally manage to please those whom we wish to please ; and watchfulness, attention, and good nature, properly applied, will, sooner or later, produce tact.

XVI.

LOOKING FORWARD.

AMONGST the many good things which this age seems to be losing, one of the chief is Hope. This is not to be wondered at; it is a phenomenon which takes place every now and then. Men's hearts become as water, and fail at such junctures. The world has seen a political deluge; the old has been torn up and swept away, and the new is not yet formed. Society in the meantime can but look on, like Mr. Micawber, and wait for what will next "turn up." But sad experience does not give it the hopefulness which was Micawber's chief characteristic. In his worst fortunes that gentleman was ready to believe in any brilliant revolution of his fate. He was ever prepared for the best, not for the worst. He would not have been surprised if an uncle, of whom he had never heard, had left him a fortune of half a million or so, or if the Lord Chancellor had given him a sinecure worth a few thousands a-year. This hopefulness is one of the charms of the character. A man who lives in the delightful expectation of "something turning

up " should be as happy as a child. It is the want of hope that kills us, the illusions that keep us alive :—

“ Bring these once more, and set me yet again

In the possession of Life's gramerie.

I was not happy ; but I knew not then

That happy I was never doom'd to be.”

While there is life there is hope : that is the sentence which cheers us all. No one thanks the prosaic man who is ready to prove that there is no ground for so pleasant an illusion, and that as yesterday was, so to-morrow will be, a day of struggle, trouble, and terrible sameness to ninety-nine out of every hundred now living in the world.

And perhaps one could not do better than to cultivate Hope largely. Both men and nations could do so, though the habit may and does grow out of fashion.

But the wisest men in the vivacious French nation, which plays so large a part in European matters, seem to have, for a time, passed under Dante's gate, upon which was written, “ All hope abandon ye who enter here ; ” and others not less wise predict a gradual decline of the Latin races. Even the ever hopeful M. Thiers could not comfort them.

A very hopeless walk is that which is all down hill,—from bad to worse ; and yet England, no less than France, is said to have entered upon it. We have ceased, it is said, to grow. Certainly our statesmen seem to be content to keep things as they are, and are ready to negative any

proposition which will call forth the vigour of the nation and cost money. Thus two friends and old enemies, England and France, the one degenerating, the other destroyed, defeated, and burdened with debt, seem to be in a hopeless condition. Philosophical Germans have, indeed, lately pictured England as falling to pieces, unable to govern, a prey to demagogues and uninstructed working classes, who are ready to sacrifice everything to Trades Unions, and guided by statesmen who are too old and too dull to see what they ought to do, or too cowardly to do it.

On the other hand, the regeneration of France seems to many a reflective Frenchman impossible. The peasantry, that stay of every nation, that broad base of all prosperity, are hastening to destruction. Goldsmith had doubtless such a picture in view when he said,—

“Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroy'd, can never be supplied.”

“The peasantry,” says M. Gabriel Monod, in his recent experiences of a campaign on the Loire, “are brutally ignorant, and even when intelligent, shamefully demoralized, and scandalously profligate and wicked. Their behaviour was the most lamentable of all the lamentable spectacles in this unhappy struggle.” It is among them “that the results

of ignorance and selfishness have exhibited themselves in the most striking manner. They were too selfish to make the least sacrifice for the soldiery,—utterly vile; their state of demoralization was frightful.”

As the French peasantry, taught by French priests, have been held up to us by Archbishop Manning as models of virtue, while England has been said by the same authority to be “a land of darkness and sin,” this simple statement surprises us. But M. Monod (and it is impossible to doubt the sincerity of this gentleman’s convictions, and every one should read his paper in *Frazer’s Magazine*) beholds also “the utter disorganization of French society,—a disorganization the present disasters in Paris are fast converting into ruin.” Whereat “the shopkeepers and idlers laugh and stare,” visit the ruins, idle about the sights, crowd to the opened theatres, and, in fact, “fiddle while Rome is burning.” “In my distress,” continues the writer, “I ask myself, Whence are we to look for safety and regeneration? Can it be that this great nation, which has done so much for civilization and the world, is destined to end by pointing the moral of her own ruin?”

We may well pardon M. Monod for his hopelessness. M. Dumas, the younger, who has written an admirable letter to his countrymen, telling them “not to go looking for a man, but to be the men themselves,” seems to be almost as hopeless as M. Monod. “If you do not reform,”

he says, "if you continue to nurse yourselves upon lying newspapers, lying novels, political lies, and shams of all sorts, farewell to you!—the deluge is upon you! As for us, we will look out of the ark to see you drown."

Take these outlooks, then, couple them with the imbecility of our governing classes, who do not know how to say "no," and who let Hyde Park be trampled to pieces by a set of roughs,—who, to say the least, have no more business there with a political meeting than in St. Paul's Cathedral,—statesmen who waver from one side to the other, who raise more taxes, but do not try to make our army larger or more efficient,—and we shall find abundant cause to make the good men of the nations mourn: but there is no reason for either people to be hopeless. In the darkness the stars are best seen: in trouble and distress the beauty of Hope shines with its purest, steadiest lustre. It deserves to be what it is,—the centre star in the crown of religion. There it burns—its effulgence is lighted by God himself; and let us remember that there is not one of His saints in the long history of the world but has worn this crown, Faith, Hope, and Charity,—faith in goodness and in God, hope for His ultimate triumph over evil, and the loveliest love of all, sweet charity toward all men.

There are times in the life of a nation and in the life of man when want of hope is natural. In the Civil War of Charles the First, Lord Falkland, one of the most admirable

characters on either side, exhibited the deepest melancholy, and may be said to have died of regret for his country's disunion. Before the war Cromwell himself, and other patriotic men, regarding the country as hopelessly involved and under an irresponsible despot, were ready to leave it. During the French Revolution many of the best men of the Girondins committed suicide, as men utterly hopeless of their country's welfare. The same feeling was observed when the great Republic of Rome fell under the power of the ambitious men who prepared the way for Imperialism. At present, men of thought and culture in France have a grave cause to be hopeless. There seems but little prospect of regeneration. Republicanism, Bourbonism and another attack upon Rome, or the domination of the army and the return of Bonapartism, are the three paths immediately before the nation, although for a moment blocked by a Presidential term of years! Each path is beset with difficulty. A firm adherence to the policy of disarmament, retrenchment, and that peace and quietude which can alone restore the nation, is the last thing upon the programme of any party. So in life and health, man reaches a certain state of fortune or state of body in which he can pursue his course no longer. In the slang of the day, he is "going to the bad,"—his state is hopeless. At such a crisis he may be saved by bankruptcy, or by some dreadful illness. Should he abandon hope, he dies. It is not hard work that kills a

man ; it is the hopeless nature of his work, his non-success. This is always felt when a man has to struggle against a load of debt, and is well-defined as "whipping-up a dead horse."

He who abandons hope hurries on to the climax ; he looks upon the dark side of the shield ; and however bad our fortune or health may be, there are always two sides. He does not injure others, perhaps ; but he lames and cramps himself. It may be that his want of hope is owing to physical causes ; but he will do well to combat them in every possible way. He should remember, too, that Hope, like Faith, can build upon very little ; it is like many other virtues, and becomes none at all if it requires to be founded on a certainty. It often defers only a disappointment ; its fruition is, perhaps, never so enjoyable as it was painted. Expectation is almost always much better than the reality ; but what of that ? The superiority that hopeful people show over the despondent, is, that they are sustained during their trials, and that they may realize what they wish for. While the despondent man plods on his miry ways in sleet and rain, the hopeful one gaily takes his walks in sunshine. There is the same difference between the Optimist and the Pessimist.

Both reach the same end ; and both, no doubt, will be able to ascertain the great secret ; but during the journey the hopeful man and the Optimist get the best of it by a long way. The desponding, despairing nature that fears every-

thing, may wake up to what it fears. As a rule, it does not do so ; for as nothing is rarely so bright as was hoped for, so nothing is so dark as we had feared. In addition to the trouble when it comes, the desponding heart has had the miserable employment of going out and meeting the trouble on its long, melancholy journey.

The despondent ones are too fond of saying that hopeful people owe all to their sanguine complexion and condition of health. It is so easy, they assert, for Jones to be hopeful; it is natural to him. Nothing can be less true. To most men hopefulness is a virtue, because it is a task and a duty; it is not everybody who looks at the world with rose-coloured spectacles. A wise man must know that as yesterday was, so will to-day be, and that to-morrow will succeed, and other morrows after that, bearing with them the same trivial round of common wants and common duties, without any unusual or bright ray. But he does not on that account bate one jot of hope, but "still bears up and steers right onward."

So in the dead waste and middle of the night of our political existence, France and England may cherish great hopes. Now is the time for great men to be born, and for young men to grow abhorrent of time-serving and servility to the mob, of lassitude and letting things slide, and to raise themselves to what they would call a better form. We cannot yet pull our feet out of the Slough of Despond, but

we may be sure that time will bring about a reaction. History teaches us that it will be so. For a long time General Paoli struggled for the freedom of Corsica. It is but a little island, almost equally cut off from Italy and France, and at times subjugated by one or the other when wanted as a *depôt* or a resort. France has used this island with especial cruelty; but, says a French historian, "the very same year in which the patriots were put down by our arms, Corsica gave birth to one whom its conquerors were soon to acknowledge as their master." Napoleon was born at Ajaccio on the 15th of August, 1769, just two months after the French conquest of that island. His youth, spent some part in friendship with, and almost wholly in a general study of, the ancient love of freedom and Spartan simplicity of Paoli, was but a preparation for that ambitious career which raised France above the level of European nations, and his native island to the same rank as an integral portion of the Empire.

As History, while showing us that there are many discreditable failures and miserable declensions, proves to us that there is along with these a constant tendency in civilization at once to recover and to raise men to higher levels, as that poetic thought is also true which sings unfalteringly—

"Freedom's battle once begun,
Bequeathed from bleeding sire to son,
Though baffled oft, is ever won,—"

so there is with individual man constant room for hope. Poets have written on the pleasures of hope, and moralists have been very general in praising and in blaming it. "Hope," says Haliburton, "is a pleasant acquaintance, but an unsafe friend. Hope is not the man for your banker; but he may do very well for a travelling companion."

It is the best travelling companion in the world, and certainly no bad banker, if you do not draw on him too much. We all do very badly without it, for distance will lend no enchantment to the view if our companion is one of those prosaic people who assure us that all is barren from Dan to Beersheba. A certain bravery, an elevation of spirit, and constancy of mind are the concomitants of Hope. It is a noble virtue, and has its roots or its basis in faith. It reacts upon a man's self, purifies him and upholds him in his trials, and gives him strength to bear them. It is unfair to call it delusive, since delusive hopes are generally foolishly founded, and sinful or harmful in their indulgence. That hope only is righteous which has a basis of reason. When we are ready to cry with that most prosaic Glover, whom it is delightful to quote because nobody else will cite him,—

"Oh Hope, sweet flatterer, whose delusive touch
Sheds on afflicted minds the balm of comfort,"

we may be sure that we have been indulging, not our manly and reasonable, but our extravagant and romantic feelings.

It is quite true that "from the lowest depths there is a path to the loftiest height;" but it is a bad way to get there if we willingly make the descent. There is great wisdom in indulging in moderate hopes, which will add wings to our courage and energy to our wills. True hope is indeed a vigorous principle, and there has been no great man or woman but has had recourse to it. Cowley calls it "the sick man's health, the lover's victory, the poor man's wealth;" and it is indeed valuable as all these; but it is yet more,—it is the brave and wise man's consolation and staff of support; always to be retained while there is life,—never to be abandoned, even in death.

XVII.

GOOD NATURE, TEMPER, AND HUMOUR.

WHETHER our modern destructive philosopher will succeed in persuading that lofty animal called man that he is no better than he should be, and that, instead of being "a little lower than the angels," he is only a very little higher than a beast, is a question; but in his latest book, on the "Expression of the Emotions," he has produced several facts to prove that which we already know—namely, that animals exhibit good temper and bad temper, and are subject to various humours, and are of a bad or good nature as the case may be. Some of these expressions of the emotions are almost identical in either case, good or bad. Thus a cat, when pleased, will gently wave its erected tail—and Mr. Darwin is very learned as to the nerve force and proper muscles brought into play for erection: but in other specimens of the feline genus, such as the lion—*Felis leo*—gentle wagging of the tail is an expression of fury. In placing man—who has been defined as the only animal that laughs—on the same plane as the dog, Mr. Darwin roundly asserts

that dogs laugh. So they do in nursery legends; but, though a great lover of dogs, and very observant of their expressions, we can hardly accept the fact even when supported by some lines from Somerville. "A pleasurable and excited state of mind," says Darwin, "is exhibited by some dogs by grinning. This was noticed long ago by Somerville, who says—

“ ‘ And with a courtly grin the fawning hound
Salutes thee cow’ring, his wide op’ning nose
Upward he curls, and his large sloe-black eyes
Melt in soft blandishments and humble joy.’ ”

This no doubt is correct as to the eyes; but as to the grin we cannot agree—as also the “sniff” that Sir Charles Bell heard, “which resembles laughter.” The good temper and good nature of dogs and of all animals are patent to all, but for His own good purpose, God has differentiated their expression, or, to use Mr. Darwin’s method, they have not yet acquired our habit of smiling, not “even to the slight eversion of their lips, the grin and the sniff” which Sir Charles Bell found in them.

Until, then, our philosophers shall have given us something more tangible than mere bald assertions unsupported by satisfactory evidence, we shall believe that man is the only animal which smiles and laughs—but not the only one, perhaps, which weeps. To him a wider expanse of power is vouchsafed, with muscles to unclothe the lachrymatory ducts

and to pucker the good-humoured wrinkles round the eye, as well as make the mouth curve itself into varied form and to "laugh mortal" when its owner is tickled with pleasure.

What is it, this important element of life—this that carries so overwhelming a majority that it is as nine to one? The three qualities which we have chosen for the subject of this essay are very different. Good nature arises from race, blood, breeding; is inheritable, and depends more upon one's parents than upon one's self. It is also somewhat subject to geographical conditions, and takes much of its substance from the air we breathe and the land we inhabit. It is an affair of race. The mild Hindoo and the self-satisfied but "heathen Chinees," are good-natured, placid creatures, as one may see from every line of their calm countenances, although beneath that placid surface there are a host of angry passions, forceful and cruel as history has often borne witness. The Russian, Dacian, or Roumanian, the Italian, Spanish, and Celtic peoples, are by no means so good-natured, although they may be, and frequently are sweet-tempered. As a rule, nations dwelling in deeply wooded and remote countries, far from civilization and the business of the much-peopled world, are, if good-tempered, melancholy and sad, and subject to fits of dejection, delighting in gloomy subjects, both in poetry and in art.

We have an instance of a lower sense of good nature—often mentioned as appertaining to a man and almost

inseparable from him, but looked upon as a rather easy indulgence—in the case of Charles II., who would even permit his courtiers to break unseemly jests upon him; yet the countenance of Charles, as his portraits attest, is saturnine, and no doubt his natural state was melancholy, broken only by a sensual indulgence and love of pleasure. His good nature will, if studied, resolve itself into a love of ease, a sort of *laissez-faire* temper, into which his many adventures, his trials, and the temper of the times had schooled him. So long as he was at his ease he cared little, and was good-natured enough to let his own servants rob him of his fine clothes and the linen of his wardrobe; on the other hand, his Majesty withheld his servants' wages, and lost the money to his courtiers at the gambling table. A strong sense of justice prevents this sort of good nature—which, in fact, is no good nature at all, but is only to be put down to an easy temper, ready to indulge itself, and therefore not very severe on the little sins of others. There are instances, however, which most readers will call to mind, in which the easy-tempered Charles II. showed himself not only cruel but bitterly revengeful.

Temper has reference to the mind, but mostly arises from the condition of the body. An invalid is not generally in a good temper—in fact, to be irritable and peevish is the natural condition of the sick, and one in which most persons who, after some years of health, find themselves

reduced to ill-health, have to condole with themselves. For temper depends naturally on the constitution; and an irritable man, who may really be of a sweet good nature, will often bitterly blame himself for letting sudden gusts of bad temper overcome him, possibly at the very time he wishes to be agreeable and amiable. But even here "sweet are the uses of adversity"—he learns how weak a thing man's will is unless directed by a greater will, which is the very lesson he ought to learn. On the other hand, we have plenty of instances in which we can admire the governance of temper which some men have possessed. Robert Hall, the author of the "Essay on Infidelity," being troubled with an acute disease which sometimes caused him to roll on the floor with agony, would rise therefrom, wiping from his brow the drops of sweat which the pain had caused, and, trembling from the conflict, ask, "But I did not complain—I did not cry out much, did I?"

A greater man than Robert Hall, Doctor Samuel Johnson, has, we are convinced, been mistaken for an ill-natured man because he was often irritable and bad-tempered, being subject to a hypochondriacal fear of death, and a morbid state of nerves, no doubt inherited, and which it was simply impossible for him to control. It strikes us that Johnson knew himself better than those around him; for one day, when he had arrived at the ripe age of sixty-six, he dumb-founded his friend Boswell by claiming to be good-humoured;

and Boswell records it "as a proof of how little a man knows of his own character in the world." "It is a wonderful thing, sir," said Johnson, "how rare a quality good humour is in life. We meet with very few good-humoured men!"

Boswell—they were then riding in Sir Joshua Reynolds' carriage, who, though neither mentioned the fact, had good-humouredly and good-naturedly ridden forward alone, leaving his carriage to the friends because Johnson was late—mentioned four of their friends, to none of whom Johnson allowed the full quality. One was said to be "acid," which would certainly bar any claim to good humour; another was "muddy," which meant, we suppose, dull, phlegmatic, and easy only, and so on. Then, stretching himself at ease in the coach, and rolling his head, the great Cham of Literature said, "I look upon myself as a good-humoured fellow."

"This light notion of himself," adds Boswell, "struck me with wonder;" but he answered, as he notes, also smiling, "No, no, sir, that will not do. You are good-natured, but not good-humoured. You are irascible. You have not patience with folly and absurdity. I believe you would pardon them if there were time to deprecate your vengeance; but punishment follows so quick after sentence that they cannot escape."

This is a noteworthy passage. Johnson no doubt did

not possess patience with folly and absurdity ; but is a man not good-humoured because he does not? Johnson was a great moralist, and looked severely upon the misery and trouble that all unwise and ridiculously absurd persons, persons deaf to reason, bring upon mankind ; was he to be good-humoured and grin at such? Is a man whose knowledge of the world ripens, as it too frequently does, into a kindly cynicism, to be stigmatized as an ill-humoured fellow? Where are we to draw the line? It is plain that good humour would only reside with hare-brained schoolboys if this were allowed.

And, pursuing the incident, we find one of the most ill-natured traits in the good-humoured Boswell set forth incidentally and with such *naïveté* that we cannot but smile. "I had brought with me," says Boswell, "a great bundle of Scotch magazines and newspapers in which his [Johnson's] 'Journey to the Western Islands' was attacked in every mode"—let us mention that there never was a book more brutally ridiculed and "cut up" than was this book by the Scotch—"and," continues "the good-natured friend," "I read a great part of these to him, knowing that it would afford him entertainment."

Bless the word! What kind of entertainment can a sensitive author get—and authors must be sensitive, quick, vivid, easily hurt and easily wounded, or they would not be authors—from a series of ridiculous imitations and

savagely critical articles on his style? One ludicrous imitation Dr. Johnson distinguished from the mass, says Boswell—and we think that this fact will prove that he was really a good-tempered man. “This,” he said, smiling, “is the best; but I could caricature my own style much better myself”—an acute and a very good-tempered remark.

That Johnson, in spite of many roughnesses, possessed good nature, good temper, and good humour, is proved by his life. He made his house, when a very poor man himself, a kind of almshouse for those who were poorer; he never turned away from a young author who sought an introduction, or from a poor one who wanted a preface, and was known to give his last guinea to relieve distress. He no doubt put the cork in the bottle of Madeira, purchased with his own charity-guinea by Goldsmith—who at that moment was dunned by his landlady, and but for the help to be carried to prison—with sufficient emphasis. But was that ill temper? Having an awful sense of man’s sinfulness and worldly misery, he told a smiling pert lady, who loudly asserted that she was happy, that she was a wonderful woman if she was happy without youth, without good looks, without fortune, without good health, and without any reasonable hope; but can that be called ill temper? Is not a moralist to reprove what he deems to be hypocrisy? When a man pleaded good intentions, Johnson thundered out the now celebrated formula, “Sir, hell is paved with

good intentions." The sense of the proverb was known, but it had never been put so forcibly before. He who speaks with force will feel forcibly, and we may well excuse roughness and occasionally rudeness, for they do not always detract from thorough good nature and proper and due good temper.

Mercy itself, high and exalted as it is, is but a part of good nature acting through all, and in its best and noblest aspect ; and it is thrice blessed, blessing him that gives and him that takes. But it is to be noted that, when exercised in its highest instance—that of a husband forgiving an unfaithful wife—the world, and even a higher morality than that of the world, looks askance at such good nature. There are some sins which we cannot wholly forgive unless we become partakers of them and condone them. We cannot approve of the "Stranger" when he pardons Mrs. Haller, though we weep at the affecting meeting :

“ If you forget, the world will call you wise :
If you forgive, the world will call you good ;
But, if you take her to your heart again,
The world will call you very, very kind.”

There is, therefore, a limit to that kind of good nature, a limit standing between man and woman, seemingly hard, cruel, and insurmountable, but yet based upon laws proceeding from a source so wise and merciful that none can wish to overleap the granite wall of demarcation that it has raised.

Except in this, all three qualities that we write about may have free exercise, and the more they are exercised the better we shall become. There are no three minor virtues that do more good, none that enter more intimately into the little courtesies of life, none that are more able to gild and make fine and resplendent a common existence, like the sunshine which lights up a hedge-row into beauty, and makes a bare mountain side glitter and shine with splendour. Good nature is like the solid warmth of the earth, which produces the fruit and warms the cold seeds into fertile existence ; good temper is the sunshine which lights up its dark corners, and good humour the warm light which brings forward and into pleasant prominence things else unobserved.

The last—especially if it be accompanied with a true humour, a witty view of things—is the great sweetener of existence. It is, of all that is outside of us—and good humour is hardly ever acquired, although it may be easily strangled, and certainly may be cultivated—the very choicest gift that man can receive. A great estate may, and often will, make a man only more miserable, especially if he be a very highly organized and sensitive being. A great intellect is almost as sure to make him melancholy and often cynical. The wisest of men are never the happiest ; they have a keener sense of what should be, and a greater pain in knowing what is ; they feel like a neat housewife

placed in a thoroughly untidy house—full of a painful sense of disorder. Good-natured wise men often take refuge in cynicism and sarcasm, like the melancholy Jacques in the play, and avenge themselves by biting sentences intended to purge the world. Great beauty—outwardly the most enviable of gifts, the most popular and courted, and, in its natural sphere, that of upper life and easy fortune, the most powerful—very frequently stupefies and hardens. It almost always makes a man a rogue and a woman a fool. Great acquired riches—unless accompanied by good nature, wisdom, and plenty of that rare appreciation of things called humour—are simply a trap. (When a man labours for them himself, he generally wears himself out in the effort, and dies before he can enjoy them; on the other hand, if his wealth is inherited, he needs have on hog's armour, a thick skin, to put up with the sneers that his friends and acquaintances will vent upon him; but, armed with real good humour, and cultivating good nature and good temper, a man can pass through life with the lightest purse and the thinnest of cloaks. (Life's thorns will not scratch him; its troubles and pitfalls will be mere exercises to call forth this fine quality; its sorrows, when in his own breast, will be softened by this anodyne, and, when in the breasts of others, will draw forth its sweetest essence; life's little rubs and every-day annoyances will be but the flints which make the sparks fly out of this true steel. Even a

stupidly good-natured man is a pleasant companion ; and, as the world goes, a good-tempered fool is by no means to be sneered at ; but when we meet with a wise man or a wise book, replete with good humour, we should hug either to our hearts, and grapple the first to us as a bosom friend, ay, even with “ hooks of steel.”

XVIII.

THE CONTENTED MIND.

To have achieved contentment is to have conquered the world, to have mounted the highest rung of the ladder, to have climbed the mountain; and although it is perhaps easier to write an essay upon content than to practise it, we hope our readers will believe that the practice is not quite foreign to us—that we have learnt with St. Paul, whatever happens to us, “therewith to be content.” This to forestall those objectors who, discontented themselves, wish to accuse all men of the same fault. What merit there is in being contented we forbear to say.

We do not think that there is much; or, to put it the other way, if there be any merit, we think that it is amply repaid. There are some dozens of blessings pronounced upon the virtues, and they, like potatoes, are a most paying crop; but the one which crowns contentment pleases us the best. “A contented mind is a continual feast;” not that any man would be continually feasting, but, given the content, he always feels beatifically and healthily full and replete

as a man does after an abounding and wholesome meal. Perhaps there is no more comfortable earthly feeling ; it is as full of peace as a child which, having suckled sufficiently at its mother's breast, falls off smilingly to sleep. It is full of trust, hindered by no disquieting fears, blest above measure because it seeks nothing beyond the present. Such is content. It lives long, is healthy, does not quarrel nor snarl, and puts the best face on matters. It is pleasant to live with, and a good substance to work upon ; it is not rapid, nor greedy, nor slovenly in its work ; it is pleased with its remuneration ; it digests well, and is nourished, harbours no evil thoughts, is loyal, true, simple, and beautiful in its holiness, and yet it has its enemies. For, beautiful as it is, contentment is not the whole duty of man ; and it has its detractors—nay, what is more, those detractors are not without their modicum of truth.

Thus they say that content, when it possesses a man thoroughly, renders him either too great a fool to want anything, or too lazy to acquire it ; that, in this age of the world, in most countries contentment means lethargy or death—simply, that man was not born to be contented ; that a sulky quiescence which passes for it, the unwillingness of man to contend, is half made up of jealousy and half of fear ; that contentment might have been born with Adam in Paradise, but that it soon ceased to please him ; that, if contentment were universal, two generations of contented

people would "run" most of the human race to "earth," and leave the remainder spiritless, lifeless, and useless ; that contented races die out from lack of energy, and that such, during their lives, discover little and do nothing. On the other hand, the restlessness and ambition of man do much for him ; and this is not to be denied. Let us look at both sides of the question—not because we are indifferent to truth, but because by so doing we hope the sooner to discover truth.

The shrewd American clergyman (?) who writes under the name of Josh Billings, and who produces many wise and often beautiful sentences in the midst of some very bad spelling and grammar—which, by the way, is not at all funny, but merely the exploded fashion of other writers—gives us in the midst of his curious verbiage some very wise sentences, and oftentimes some very pious ones. It is like sugaring pills, to put wisdom into a mere jest-book, and to mix serious reflections with the common rough-and-tumble-talk of a clown in the circus ; but it is an old fashion, dating perhaps in its earliest shape even from the time when language first assumed a written form. When one gives the public a large slice of unadulterated and dry wisdom in a didactic essay, it needs great art to render it attractive and to induce them to read it. But, when one introduces the subject with a brilliant display of bad spelling, or with a quantity of coarse nastiness, as Rabelais—when one spells

ambition “ambishun,” and calls a man a “miserabel cuss” —the reader picks the jewel out of the mud, wipes it clean, and contemplates it. Thus Josh Billings, whose spelling we now and then follow, speaks in axioms often as wise as those of La Rochefoucauld.

“Show mè a thoroughly kontented person, and i will show you a useless phool.”

“I am in favour of all the vanities and petty ambitions, all the jealousies and backbitings in the world—not because I think they are handsome, but because they stir up men and women, get them on to their muscle, cultivating their venom and reason at the same time, and proving what a brilliant ‘cuss’ a man may be at the same time that it proves what a miserable ‘cuss’ he is.”

“The world is now full of learning, the arts and sciences, and all the thousand appliances of reason ; these things make ignorance the exception, and no man has a right to cultivate contentment enny more than he has to cut off his thumb and nurse the stump.”

“I have no right to bury my talents and to sacrifice on the dead altar of contentment what was given me.”

When the bad spelling is taken away, we see that there is very little of what the author calls “phun,” but that there is a great deal of wisdom of a one-sided kind. Let us take, for instance, his view of the petty ambitions and the vanities of life, and grant that they stir up men and women, and

cultivate their venom and wisdom ; but, if we do so too confidently, we shall be showing ourselves contented with a partial view. How much evil have the vanities of life not done ! How much misery and bloodshed do the petty ambitions and the jealousies of the world occasion ! If we strike a balance between the good and evil, and allow that nothing is perhaps wholly evil, that is all we can fairly do.

Moreover, is it certain that discontent creates in us the ambition to discover and to invent ? We very much question this. Poets write and versify as linnets sing, because they must, and because of the God-given power, and, moreover, because they are happy while they are so doing. It may enter into a modern “ philosopher’s ” conception that a hungry and discontented bear once swam out to catch fish, and by fitness and constant change through centuries bred into the walrus. Our stupidity may be very great, but we honestly cannot conceive that such was the case. We believe in purpose—walrus for water and bear for land ; and what is true of the larger is true of the less. The inventor generally, we presume, invents because he has had given to him an active and creative brain. Necessity may urge him to be active in the way he is biased, and undoubtedly does so ; but hundreds of thousands of persons feel the stings of necessity and the pangs of discontent before one inventor shows them the way out of them. Thus it is that “ necessity is the mother of invention ” is,

like all other truths, only true in a restricted sense. Whole races of men are non-inventive and stationary ; whether they are contented or not, is a question ; their necessities are as great as our own, and they are as eager to embrace the results of invention. Man must therefore be regarded really as a creature of gifts, and these gifts are restricted in their fullness to perhaps much less than a fourth of the inhabitants of the globe. Such gifts may be stimulated by necessity, but they are not created by it, and a part of the diatribe against contentment, viewed in this light, must fall to the ground.

Again, it may be very well urged—and a hundred biographies will support the assertion—that, as a rule, great inventors, poets, wise writers, lawgivers, and those who with most active brains improve their condition and their fellows' condition are, comparatively, the most contented of the earth. Great painters are proverbially so. Let us take Turner, a creative genius of a very high order, who revealed to this age the beauty of colour, the grandeur of the clouds and the atmosphere, the majesty of landscape, and the glories of the sky. Actually, as regards either the luxuries or the bare necessities of life, the man was far beyond thinking of them, much less caring for them. He would often work without food, forgetful of hunger. To him to paint, to roll up his compositions, to sell them, to heap up his money without using it, to live as meanly as an ill-paid artisan, to clothe himself shabbily, seldom to enter into society, and to

indulge as little as possible in the vanities of this life, was sufficient. That he was jealous of a rival who "put out" his landscape by crude colour hanging next to it—that he had a noble ambition to excel the French landscape-painter, Claude Lorraine, we do not attempt to deny. But, as a rule, his life was passed in obscurity and in contentment, himself not dreaming of how great a painter he was until the brilliant criticisms of John Ruskin threw a glare of light and fame upon him. Surely he did not owe his genius and greatness to his discontent?

So much as we know of Shakspeare and Milton will reveal to us little of discontent in these great minds. Shakspeare has been accused of being so careless of fame that he neither gathered his plays during his life, as did his great rival Jonson, calling them Works, nor did he, says Jonson, take trouble to blot and correct those that he had written. There is evidence that he improved and re-wrote *Hamlet*, but not much else; and his contemporaries and those that followed them nearly all speak of his rough-and-ready workmanship. When he had by other means than his dramas accumulated sufficient, he retired to his native town, spent his money freely, and died at an early age, comparatively speaking. We may gather from his works a whole cento of splendid passages in favour of content and of her sister virtues. "Poor and content," he says, "is rich and rich enough," a line which exactly fits the subject

and us better than the French "Contentment exceeds riches."

Milton lay under a cloud during the latter part of his life. His noble cause was in disgrace, himself almost a proscribed man, allowed probably to live because all Europe would have been scandalized had he been executed. Yet blind, comparatively poor and deserted, there is at least very little expression of discontent in his writings ; his noble lines on his blindness breathe a splendid acquiescence in and a noble submission to the Divine will. One line in that sonnet which pictures himself as unable to work, and yet shows how God is surrounded by ranged angels and willing messengers to do His will, deserves to be written up over every restless man's desk or mantelpiece—

"They also serve who only stand and wait."

These are not the sentiments of a "phool."

And what we have said of these two great poets may be said of almost every inventor and brain-worker. That inventors are often discontented men no one will affect to deny ; but they are so because others steal their ideas, or they are not appreciated, or they lay hold of the wrong end of the invention ; but, from Arkwright and Stephenson far away back to Archimedes, all inventors have been singularly modest and quiet individuals, so full of their great ideas that they never troubled their neighbours except

to get material to carry on their designs. Like spiders, they must spin, and like spiders, if left to spin quietly, they fulfil their function happily enough. So much for the assertion that it is to the want of content we owe so much. It is so far from being so that we may roundly assert that it is to the peaceful operations of a contented mind that we are greatly indebted. Of course it is indicative of the restless spirit of America and England that few patent plain old truths are allowed to go unquestioned. A man who tells us that two and two make four is perhaps too strongly posted in his facts to be questioned; but here we find a man who denies that contentment is a blessing, and asserts that man is never contented, and then, if he be so, he is a "mean cuss."

When contentment means the contraction and lethargy of death, of course it is bad; when it means a wise and sustained circumscription, it is like a belt round a man's loins, strengthening him wholly. Of course it is to be construed generously. It is like the Church Catechism, and means life and not death. We do not praise a corpse for its calm quiescence in its coffin; and when a child defines his duty towards his neighbour as consisting in trying "to learn and labour truly to get mine own living, &c., in that state of life unto which it has pleased God to call me," we are to remember that the past includes the future. We are not stationary, nor asked to be so; the religion which most

preaches content is the most unwearied and active in the world. The catechised who as a drummer-boy does his duty may be, ere he is twenty-two, a colour-sergeant, and in a battle win his officer's commission; there are many instances in our army now. He is not absolved from his vow to duty any more than he was bound down always to remain a drummer-boy. But, if he is content with the one, he will be with the other, and he will do his duty a thousand-fold better in both positions; and while so doing he will be so much better.

Content carries in one hand health, and in the other happiness—and few will deny the beauty of these. It is of its own nature generous; contracting our desires, it leaves us time to think of the wants and necessities of others. It is wisdom—plain, practical wisdom. After all, if we have enough to eat and drink, and wherewithal to be clothed decently, and in a cleanly fashion, what much else do we want? “Is that great animal better,” says Jeremy Taylor, with one of his poetical similes, “that hath two or three mountains to graze o’er than a little bee that feeds on dew and the manna of flowers, and what falls every morning from the storehouse of heaven, clouds, and Providence? Can a man quench his thirst better out of a river than a full urn, or drink better from the fountain that is richly paved with marble than when it wells from the hill-side and fresh green turf?”

Nevertheless, we admit that content must ever be comparative. It must be so, or it would not be the merit of the well-to-do as well as of the poor. A man whose knowledge is bounded by the walls of his cottage, and whose desires are mere appetites, can be easily satisfied. Knowledge increases our legitimate wants. It would not now do to be content with bows and arrows for warfare, or the scythed chariot of the Britons for a cavalry charge against a picked body of riflemen, backed by a few Armstrong and Gatling guns. As the world advances our horizon widens, but we can still grasp the golden circlet of supremely wise content. How great and good it is to sit at Nature's feast, and feel satisfied and thankful whilst others storm and struggle and push forward for the first places, and yet are not better filled than we are ! There is but one man greater than any rich man, and that is he that is satisfied with little. And this kind of satisfaction can never be taken away : it resides in a man's own self ; it is like the Kingdom of God, of which it forms a part within him.

XIX.

DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

ONE wonders whether the world believes that the prosaic duties of paying one's debts and living below one's income (a very hard matter for some of us), ever enters into the list of heroic virtues which constitute the best part of the better self. And yet they do, especially the latter.

Thrift is a badly used English word, not understood, and almost as much out of fashion as the practice of the thing it signifies. People seem to have imagined that it was a matter to be ashamed of, and that Hamlet's excuse of his mother's hasty marriage on the ground of

“Thrift, thrift, Horatio ! the funeral bak'd meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables,”

was a satire against thrift, instead of being a bitter and scathing invective against an incontinent and hasty marriage.

In these showy, veneered, French-polished, and foolishly profuse times, a few words on thrift may be of use; but in writing a short essay we must not fancy that we can accom-

plish much all at once. The writer is the sower who goes out to sow seed ; his words may do good, or they may fail. In nineteen cases out of twenty they do fail, but if he succeeds in planting only one or two sound thoughts, then he does God service ; and to do that is to do good service.

Let us, then, clear the way. Thrift is not a word of evil significance, but of good ; it does not carry an imputation of meanness, but of wisdom ; it does not mean improperly saving up or hoarding money, but wisely spending it. It is perhaps one of the highest attributes of very high natures. When it accompanies a great man, it makes him very great ; it completes the building ; sets him up as one who is *totus teres atque rotundus*, like a scholar who is a mathematician as well as a scholar, and is a “double first ;” first in the classical and first in the mathematical tripos of this great university. As to other men we may dispute, but as to Shakspeare—except among some insanely conceited young prigs—there is no doubt that he possessed the highest imaginative and reflective intellect the world has ever known : and he was especially a thrifty man.

He came to London with nothing, he had little or nothing when he was thirty, and he died possessor of the best house in his native town, and making (so said the vicar) two thousand a year, which must have been a very large sum in our present money. He had a share in two theatres, a large wardrobe of player's clothes, a house at

Bankside, some estate in the country; he gave money, and he lent money. He was certainly a successful man, for his works were received by his fellows with all the jealousy and apathy that success provokes. One need not then suppose that thrift shows a small mind, nor that it is meanness or want of generosity. A more genial and generous man than Shakspeare, for one so wise, it is difficult to conceive.

The derivation of "thrift" will help us to its true meaning. Thrift is only the past participle of the verb *to thrive*, and probably comes from the Anglo-Saxon *thraffian*, *urgere*, or *co-agere*, to get on, press together, heap up; or its original root *threaf*, a thrave or threave, a capital old word, not yet obsolete, meaning a handful, a gathering, and also a bottle. It always carries with it an idea of wisdom, of carefully and wisely doing a thing. Thus singeth Master George Chapman, in his "Homer":—

"We may both safely make retreat and *thriftily* employ
Our boldness in some great affaire, baneful to them of Troy."

The Duke of Wellington was especially and most honourably thrifty of his men. "If," said one of the Indian princes, "I had such soldiers as the English, I would carry them to the field of battle in chairs of gold, and let them do nothing but fight. I would save them as if they were made all of diamonds." The Duke always acted upon that principle, and was prodigal of himself only. He would

worry the Government till they hated his very name ; punish a commissariat-general ; write, plead, do anything for his soldiers ; even on certain occasions hang one, as a saving example. Napoleon, on the other hand, careless of means, and greedy of the event, was prodigal of human life, and almost utterly regardless of human suffering. But which was the more honourable and the greater soldier ? Perhaps the wise after-time will do justice to the little, cold, quiet, impassive English officer, who did not make harangues, nor issue eloquent and big-worded proclamations, but simply did his duty, and managed to win. Actually, to go back to our word, "*thrift*" is *thrived* or *thriven*, and to thrive means "to accumulate ; to be or become rich, wealthy, prosperous ; to prosper, to succeed, to improve." Its secondary meaning is to be frugal, provident, cautious, and careful.

The present is a thriftless age. We have made money,—some people are making it now ; but with the various sets-off against us, with the complaints and starvation of our agricultural class, we cannot have much to brag about. The nation, as a whole, is accumulating wealth, but is not wisely saving it. She is sending away by enforced emigration some excellent productive wealth ; she is keeping other living wealth in constrained and most unwilling idleness. This is not thrift.

Thrift, then, is not simply saving. You must do something ; you must have increase, or, at least, not decrease.

Johnson, who with a very little money kept a large family of strangers in his house, had always something to spend and a guinea to give away ; whereas Goldsmith, who had a more marketable talent, and made money much more easily, was always poor, and glad to take the doctor's guinea. Dr. Johnson easily learnt the practice of thrift : and he tells us upon what a small sum he managed to live when he first came to London. " I dined," he said, " very well for eightpence at the ' Pine Apple,' in New Street, and with very good company. Some of them had travelled. They expected to meet every day, but did not know each other's names. It used to cost the rest a shilling, for they drank wine " (claret—the extremely high wine duties were not then in force) ; " but I had a cut of meat for sixpence, and bread for a penny, and gave the waiter a penny ; so that I was quite as well served, nay, better, than the rest, for they gave nothing." Here, then, is a true instance of thrift, accompanied by generosity ; and if sixpennyworth of meat and a pennyworth of bread will feed a man, so as to keep him in health and manly vigour, why should he not make that sufficiency his rule ? As Johnson wrote in 1737, and the price of provision has increased, let us multiply the eightpence by three ; the relative value of the sum then and now. Certainly any young man in London can dine well for two shillings per diem.

Johnson's was a very direct mind. When oppressed

with neuralgia and melancholy he was asked as to the relative value of wines, and he jumped at once to the ultimate cause of the desire for this luxury. "After all," he said, "brandy is the best ; that does for a man quickest and best *what he wants doing*." That is, it soothes, drugs, and intoxicates, if you will : and that, in plain English—only they do not own it—is what most men want.

A gentleman, an Irish painter, whom Johnson met in early days, was the original of Ofellus in the *Art of Living*. So far from thinking that one ought to have at least three hundred a year, this wise gentleman said of London that "thirty pounds a year was enough to enable a man to live there without being contemptible." He allowed ten pounds for clothes and linen ; he said a man might live in a garret at eighteen-pence a week ; he might dine for sixpence ; by spending threepence a day in a coffee-house he might be for some hours a day in very good company ; he might breakfast on bread and milk for a penny, and do without supper. "*On clean shirt days he should go abroad and pay visits.*"

This, of course, will not quite do for our times ; thirty pounds a year then represented perhaps ninety of this day ; but we seriously maintain that such an existence, narrowed as it is, and yet made pure and beautiful by moderation and content, is a thousand times more noble than that of the always full and feasted wasteful young citizen or city clerk of to-day, always well-dressed, well-gloved, clean-shirted, who spends

three or four or six shillings for his dinner, is wasteful, gluttonous, loud, selfish, and full of pride and folly. Our age is supremely careless and luxurious; we mistake riot for generosity, and luxury and license for liberality. It is well to be recalled to the wisdom of saving. No man, except the miser who starved himself to death, ever repented of checking his appetites and restraining his passions.

Johnson, thirty years afterwards, referred to the duty of thrift, when he wrote to Mr. Benet Langton, a gentleman of birth and fortune, to inquire how his uncle, Mr. Peregrine Langton, had lived; for this he said was notable in him, that he was to be distinguished "for piety and economy." Here Johnson uses economy in its new sense, for "*thrifty management*, frugality in the use of money, time, or labour," as defined in our dictionaries. Peregrine Langton was just dead (1766); he had an annuity of two hundred a-year, and rented a house and a few acres for twenty-eight pounds a year; his sister paid him eighteen pounds a year for board and lodging, and he maintained a niece. His family was served by two maids and two men in livery; he had a carriage and horses. "He always had a post-chaise, and kept three horses." * He was served daily with three or

* If he in his time could have done this, at what state could not Shakspeare have lived with his two thousand a year in the days of James I? We must all be sadly afraid that the Stratford-on-Avon's parson's legend is an exaggeration.

four dishes ; the appurtenances of his table were neat and handsome ; he frequently entertained company, when he gave as good as the neighbouring gentry, and yet he had always a sum of money lying by him for any extraordinary need. What money he saved he put in the funds, and when he died he had a hundred and fifty pounds there. He often lent money to neighbours, always paid cash, never keeping his creditors waiting ; nay, he would take his custom from a tradesman who trusted his servants. His servants having said that the ale was not enough, he, to prove that it was, ordered the quantity to be bottled, and served out so many bottles a day, "eight quarts, which is the quantity each day at a hogshead a month ;" whereupon his servants found they had had too much, and not too little.

That is exactly thrift. Here is a man, even too liberal, giving sixteen pints of beer a day to four women and three men, and yet having to prove his liberality to them by management ; and yet how stupid have our greatest men been in this respect ! How very foolish are our young men and good families now ! William Pitt—the son of him who is so much praised by Carlyle as having checked France, and "created" Prussia—died shockingly in debt. In 1801 he owed £45,864, and paid his creditors five shillings in the pound by the aid of a loan. Yet his butcher's bill—there was no wife to superintend the house—was so enormous, that some one has calculated it as affording his

servants about fourteen pounds of meat a day, each man and woman ! Pitt was an instance, you will say, from the old wasteful Tory days ; but his salary (five thousand pounds a year) was ample then, whereas it would not be so now for a Prime Minister. Then, too, look at Richard Cobden, who sought to check the expenditure of the nation, and never stopped his own. Three times he came upon the nation ; three times he sent (or his friends sent) "the hat round," and he claimed and got liberal assistance. His friend Joseph Hume was more consistent. Coming home one day, he saw a new and strange cat crossing his hall, and wisely told his housekeeper that two cats were enough to kill all the mice in a London house, and that the newly imported Tom must be banished, or die. People laugh at this anecdote. Why ? Because a man governs vast concerns, is it shameful in him to look to trifles ? Trifles make up the sum of life. To use once more a worn-out but well-filled illustration, an elephant, which can rend an oak, can also pick up a pin with his trunk. Is the pin-picking, if this be true, any proof of weakness ?

The truth is, we of the Teuton, or to use a much abused phrase, the Anglo-Saxon race, are a very profuse, wasteful, foolish race. Webster, the American statesman, an excellent man, was worried all his life with little debts, although his earnings were immense. There is nothing more sad than that a great life should be rendered sordid and mean from

want of a little prudence. And yet it is so with some of the best and highest intellects we have. Men of letters, artists, actors, philosophers, and scholars are too often deficient in the great, honest, and wise principle that lies at the bottom of thrift. So also are many clergymen; and yet the Apostle tells us that "if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." How can a spendthrift be just? How can he dare to be generous? Why, if I think great thoughts, should I be excused if I do foolish actions? If I paint a good picture, do I not own myself an incomplete thing if I cannot spend a pound properly? If I act Hamlet like a genius, am I not a fool if I cannot be trusted with money that I owe to my tailor, when a wine bottle is near me? Is not profuseness weakness? We shall most of us agree to say that it is.

XX.

EXPECTANCY.

IN one of Victorien Sardou's pieces, which attracted great popularity in Paris, there is a fine "situation" of which the actors, with that brilliant tact and taste for which French artistes are celebrated, make much. The audience are compelled to take a political view of the scene; and, between the fine acting and the political hit, the "situation" does not fail to bring down a storm of applause. The incident occurs in *Le Roi Carotte*, a very much mutilated edition of which was played in London, with all its moral and its politics cut out as a thing of nought. Suffice it to say that, in France under the Empire that fell at Sédan, the very name of the vegetable hero and the necessary colour of his costume were covert allusions to the Red Republic which an English audience would neither understand nor appreciate. The freedom of Englishmen under an Executive which they themselves elect and can at a moment dismiss, and the despotisms of which, small as

they may be—such as the peremptory closing of public-houses and the restrictions of the liquor traffic—they (the public) themselves demand and sometimes clamour for, is so great that they cannot be expected to feel the fiery impatience of a nation groaning under the paternal interference of an Executive which never knew the art of leaving well alone, and which meddled with and taxed everything. In saying this much, we do not deny that England is pretty well favoured with taxes, as every prominent and busy nation with a part to play in the world must be ; but, through their representatives, the people of Great Britain have “a word or two” to say before such taxes are imposed ; and after all, we must admit that most of them are the result of our greatness.

To return to Sardou's piece. The Prince who is the hero possesses inexhaustible riches and a power that has no bounds ; he has also immortality ; and yet, seeking a magician, he wishes this gift to be taken away from him and to die. Upon this the magician naturally asks why ? “You see this purse,” says the Prince : “I have only to wish for money, and it is filled ; whatever is most precious, beautiful, and costly is mine. You think this gain ? Alas ! in this I lose all the pleasure of anticipation—all the delights of winning anything by my own exertions. All that I have costs me nothing ; everything is therefore worthless. I can have no pleasure in possession ; the humblest peasant

who cultivates his plot of ground is happier than I." "But there is friendship," suggests the magician. "Alas! how can I test that? Everybody bows to me for my riches or for my power." "Love?" adds his interlocutor, "Worse and worse; I have but to wish, and the most beautiful, most charming, most intellectual women at once yield to me. What do I know of the mingled pleasure and pain of gaining a true and pure heart? What of the rapture which crowns the happy lover who dotes yet doubts—who trembles in expectation, and who, when he hears the soft confession, is lifted to the seventh heaven of bliss? What do I know—what can I know—of that subtle, sweet self-flattery which tells the poorest of my subjects that he is esteemed and loved for himself alone?" "Alas! my Prince," is the sad rejoinder, "beware of absolute power."

The sting and the poison, the honey and the virtue of the piece, are in those last words. Napoleon III. must have found other reasons when, deceived and betrayed, his army disappeared before the Prussians—that army composed of brave men unfed, unequipped, and unshod. But the lesson is not for him, but for us. We are none of us likely to have absolute power, although we may be little tyrants in our own way; but we may as well reflect that if we had it, it would be a curse. We should, at least, miss the hopes and fears of life, which, like contrasts of colour in a picture, add harmony to the whole. We grumble a good

deal here about the weather, although Charles II., always sententiously wise,

“Who never said a foolish thing,
Nor ever did a wise one!”

told his courtiers not to grumble about it. “I have travelled,” he said, alluding to his exile, “in various countries, and I assure you that, for pleasant, wholesome out-door exercise England has the best climate of the whole.” For the epigram just cited he cared nothing; for he said “it was quite true, as his words were his own, but his actions were his Ministers’.” As Hood’s rose-girl, hawking roses from door to door, “hates the smell of roses,” so there are those who hate the pitiless and blinding sunshine which strikes upward, reflecting from hot sand, bleached flag-stones, or pebbly beach, until the eye grows tired and the brain reels. We complain of drizzling rains; what are they to the tropical down-pour or the mountain storm, which tears and ravages the earth, and in a few hours rends out deep watercourses and turns the dry land into a lake? The middle state is by far the best of all—the middle state, never free from fears, but always accompanied by hopes—that state which bars no gate to a lawful ambition, and which strengthens while it controls.

In addition to this consideration, it must be noted that the man who is the richest and greatest, the man who has all his desires and wishes most nearly fulfilled, is by no

means the happiest. It is the fullest stream that looks the most gloomy; whereas the shallow brook runs bright, sparkling, and dimpling in the morning sun. The happy man is he who, in health and with due caution and wisdom, is pursuing what he knows to be right; and this men with well-regulated minds must do when they have their families and themselves to provide for. Such a man, engaged in the pursuit of the useful, distinguishes, to use the words of Walter Savage Landor, the true boundary between desire and delight, and stands firmly upon the upper ground. He who knows that pleasure is not only not possession, but is always to be lost and always to be endangered, will be moderate in his hopes. The old story, so many times told, of Alexander the Great's crying because he had no more worlds to conquer, shows us how dangerous it is to put a limit to Hope. And truly, the usual run of preachers and essayists, of moralists and poets, have dealt unfairly with Hope. With them it is assailed with the common-place objurgations of being delusive, deceitful, a bubble, a cheat, and a flatterer. So it is, if one likes to make it so. But the fault lies with the individual. This we have said before, but it may as well be repeated: it is a tune well worth playing over and over again, at a time wherein young and old have lost a good deal of that bright hope which the nation used to have. More than one change of faith, aye and shipwreck of faith, begins with a want of hope. It

relieves poverty, takes away the sting from rejection, and defeats and smooths the pillow of disease and pain.

If it does all this, wherein is it delusive? What can a man ask for more? We find fault with our medicine, with the breath that that medicine has given us; we abuse our food with the strength it has furnished, if we allow that Hope soothes our woes, and yet complain of it. (Hope is the very life-blood of the unfortunate; and, as a rule, it is precisely those who are most unfortunate who have most Hope.) Among the phenomena which astonish physicians and doctors is the fact that, under the most depressing circumstances, under diseases which lower the strength and fret and decay the body, accompanying pain which racks and irritations which torment, Hope flourishes in a manner marvellous and unaccountable, and almost incredible; how it does so, they cannot say. Any one who has visited the poor and the afflicted must have often marvelled at their patience. People in hospitals and upon sick beds seem to us like those far down in wells and deep pits, who can see the stars shining which the greater light hides from us. It is for small mercies that we are the most thankful, and Hope never deserts us at our worst need. If we once allow the truth of Pope's couplet—and he must be a bold man who questions it—

“Hope springs eternal in the human breast;
Man never is, but always to be, blest,”

we must at once concede that man is a happy creature, and that in enjoying Hope he enjoys something more pleasing, certainly much more brilliant and better than possession. Hope, or expectation, is a long-enduring pleasure ; possession to most of us affords only a brief regret. "Well, I am sorry that it is all over, and I wish I was going again this day week," said the boy, after he had seen the pantomime. He wanted the excitement of Hope ; fruition of the play was but at best a few hours' indulgence—like looking at fireworks, an enjoyment, brilliant perhaps, but certainly evanescent.

Although hopes are antagonistic to fears—for Hope increases courage, makes a man ready to face danger, discovers new continents, finds out hidden treasures and fruitful islands, and is at the bottom of all the work of the world—yet without them the former would weave into far too gay a pattern. The fears supply the darker colours, and work well into the design. As Walt Whitman said of the graves of the soldiers and the bodies of the dead men during the American War—"They too fit well into the landscape !" The fears we speak of check and at the same time strengthen our hopes ; they prune the tree, and the wood grows the stronger. In fact, were it not for them, Hope would merge into certainty, without those gradations of doubt which make even deferred hopes brilliant and beautiful. It is well now and then to dash and discolour the hopes of the young, but

not to destroy them. Anaxagoras, the wise Greek, thought it better by far to supply them to the young—but at a distance. Being asked by the people of Lampsacus whether, when he died, they could do anything to commemorate him, “Yes,” he answered, “let the boys have a holiday on the anniversary of my death.” To that he knew they would look forward, and by that would he be remembered. There is something very beautiful in the gentle wisdom which dictated the answer. The harder the tasks, the greater the troubles of the little Greek scholars, the brighter would appear the holiday they were to have; and when they had grown into reflective men, and looked back on happy days gilded with the spring of youth, they would remember the occasion, and inquire who was that Anaxagoras who had got them the holiday. The world ought to show more men like this philosopher, who built his hopes of being remembered after death on the happiness he had given to those who remained alive.

The most frequently quoted passage concerning Hope is one that does not do much credit to man’s appreciation of the blessing: for a blessing it is, the basis of courage, force, endeavour, and power; so much so, that there is no instance that can be cited from history of a great man who was not, at least during his time of action—his youth and his manhood—a hopeful man. The quotation referred to is generally unfairly given, because its best and explanatory

half is omitted. It is from the Proverbs of Solomon : “ Hope deferred maketh the heart sick ; but ”—here comes the chief clause—“ when the desire cometh it is a tree of life.” The first clause refers to the fears which always accompany Hope, as the shadow follows the figure of a man walking in the sunshine ; but the “ desire ” (literally the Hope), when it cometh, is “ a tree of life.”

Doctor Johnson, sage in his observation, although a man bent down by hereditary disease and many cares, recognises this. Throughout his works there are constant references to the good which Hope does. “ Whatever enlarges Hope,” he says in one place, “ will exalt courage ; ” in another, “ Always cultivate Hōpe : our powers owe much of their energy to our hopes.” Again, “ It is the chief blessing of man ; ” ay, not only a blessing in the sense that some people mean—a spiritual aid, an unseen, an intangible matter—but real riches, real comfort, and true health. He is poor indeed who has lost all Hope, and is a mere subject to fear and dread and melancholy. The fearful, hopeless man is truly poor, a double sufferer, an anticipator of evils, a shrinking coward when those evils come ; whereas Hope, like the cork jacket to a man learning to swim, not only supports him and gives him strength at the outset, when he most wants it, but absolutely teaches him and sustains him in his endeavours.

It will be well if parents, and those who try to attain a

better self, would try to cultivate and not to check hopes in their children and themselves. Some old bachelor relations seem akin to Ralph Nickleby, who calls Nicholas a boy, with supreme contempt, as if he never had been a boy himself, and as if he could be so at any time of his life, but would not be on any account. These old bachelors, and old maids too, not being accustomed to children, are shocked and astonished at their exuberant happiness and ever-budding hopes. The great point that these kindly relations make is to continually snip off such tender buds ; or, if they find Hope blossoming, to root up as much as they can of the blessed flower. "Oh, we are going out, auntie, into the country : we shall be so happy !" "My child," is the sombre reply, "we are not made to be happy; the last time *I* went out it rained all day long, and spoilt my new silk dress." "Blessed is he," cries the dry and misanthropic uncle, "who expecteth nothing ; verily, he shall not be disappointed." We doubt and question both clauses of the sentence. A man who expects nothing is the very reverse of blessed. A man without Hope sinks like lead to the bottom of Life's turbid stream. Nor do we believe that he is not disappointed. The man who hypocritically pretends that he expects nothing, that he is a contented creature, without Hope and without any extravagant idea, accepting the plain jog-trot way of life, is generally a selfish, quiet, reticent fellow, who indulges in the wildest

ambitions, and who would not be surprised if a relation left him a windfall of half a million, or the inhabitants of the Fiji Islands came over here to lay their crown at his feet. Let us teach children to indulge in moderate and manly hopes ; not to be played with, but to be supported by. Such hopes almost always come true, as good men will tell who have known life's ways and God's goodness, and who own that He gives to by far the greatest number of us "more than we either desire or deserve."

XXI.

ON KEEPING PEOPLE DOWN.

NEXT to the generous and open approval certainly should be considered that famous family panacea with some people, of educating children by "snubbing" and pressing them down. Now he who said that a positive injury was sooner forgiven and forgotten than a positive insult, was quite right. The sense of injury brings with it a feeling of importance, but not the snub. A little farmer will brag that Lord Dash-away, a neighbouring potentate of the hunting-field, has committed a trespass, and he feels happy. It is no matter that he has a few acres of turnips ruined from the way in which "my lord," followed by the whole "field," careered, like a *Wilder Jäger*, over the turnip patch. For the time the agriculturist is on an equality with "my lord;" but if Mr. Wurzell had been snubbed by his lordship, had been contemptuously overlooked or slighted, he would feel much more hurt.

This sort of deadly wound is one of the facts and one of the puzzles of humanity. It is certain that all feel a slight;

and yet at the same time the word itself shows the small importance of the injury. When Dryden, in one of his fine and sonorous verses, made his heroine say—

“My wound is great because it is so small,”

the Duke of Buckingham, who hated and ridiculed the brave old poet, rose in his box and rejoined, in a loud voice—

“Then it were greater were it none at all !”

But, though he destroyed the chance of the play, he did not root up the truth of the line. Wounds are often great because they are small ; and perhaps Buckingham’s line is not altogether nonsense. It may be that, when there is no wound at all, we are worst off. Here is a subtle confession, made in a speech by the grave Mr. Henry Richard, M.P.

“The Nonconformists,” he had the humour or satire to say, “were an eminently quiet, retiring, and domestic people”—then who causes the commotion ? “They were sometimes called the stormy petrels of politics, delighting in the strife of elements, and taking pleasure in contention ; but that was not the case. He only wished to pull down the partition wall (the Church) between Conformists and Nonconformists, that they might be placed on a level of absolute freedom.” Considering how lively the Nonconformists are, that several were in the late Government, and that they did almost what they liked with Ireland, and have broken up every scheme of general education for fifty years,

this was not so bad. Mr. Richard then enumerated the wrongs he and his fellows have to bear. "Nonconformists were told that the only sacrifices they had to bear were social sacrifices. But what sacrifices could be more galling than these? They were insulted, sneered at, looked at askance, and placed at a disadvantage in competition for public offices."

These were now all the grievances of which Mr. Richard, in a sensational speech, had to complain. The great and good John Bunyan was imprisoned by a tyrannical government—and the circumstance was a providential one, for through it we acquired the tinker's wonderful book. The saint-like early Nonconformists—of whom there were many—suffered from the operation of the Five-mile Act, and had to travel ten miles to and fro to preach their antagonism. But Mr. Miall and Mr. Richard, M.P., have to undergo no such deprivations, and, in the way of exaggeration, "give rein" entirely to their imagination. We need hardly say that since, in four short years, two of the senior wranglers of Cambridge have been sons of Nonconformists, and that these young men would be welcomed in any office or in any society—since Jews, the most nonconforming of all, have held eminent offices under Government and entertain the Heir to the Crown as a guest—what Mr. Richard says is simply untrue. As to the fact of Nonconformists being "insulted, sneered at, looked at askance," we can say

little. They are perhaps snubbed—they know best whether they are or not. A Churchman, for instance, does not desire to be married in a Dissenting chapel, nor to be buried in a Dissenters' burial-ground ; therefore neither he nor his friends get "snubbed" by refusal. Nor does he hear the surprised "Oh !" of the parson when a life-long dissent is broken up by such occasional conformity. But, beyond that, the Dissenter gets really no more than he asks for. He himself has chosen, for conscience' sake, to be a Dissenter. Is he so unheroic as to wish to play the part of a hero and yet to bear no pain or penalty? He chooses, let us say, to be a Quaker, and to wear a broad-brimmed hat and a straight-cut coat. Do his fellow Christians "snub" him because their hats are narrow and their collars fold over? He deems it sinful to take an oath, and he has been relieved from the necessity, while we are obliged to swear. It is we who are "snubbed."

If we choose to separate in thought or in action from the body of our fellow-Christians, we must be prepared to hallow our sacrifice in some way. If we choose to abstain from wine, we cannot be angry if the bottle is not put before us. To go away from the herd, and then to say that we are ill-used and have the worst of the pasturage, is to complain with as comical an ignorance as the clown in Hamlet, who says it is a shame that the rich people should be allowed to kill themselves more than their "even Christians."

And a very happy thing it is for us that we can record the fact that all that Mr. Miall and Mr. Richard can say is that "Noncons." get "snubbed." Their wound is great because it is so small. No one wishes to elevate them into martyrs—and nothing hurts some people so much as being let "severely alone."

If we turn to the "weaker vessel," as woman has been called, in simple and Christian charity, we shall find that very much of the injustice she complains of amounts merely to "snubbing." There are questions that men think too delicate to debate before women, as unfitted for their experience. There are secrets in all trades; and we who, so to speak, carry on the trade of being men, object to the presence of those who are not of our sex. We do this partly out of politeness, partly because women are not cool judges of affairs masculine, partly because we consider certain provinces to be our own. Our simple reservation of many of the hardest, most unpleasant, and worst-paid businesses to our sex has hurt women more than we know. They quarrel with nature and with society. A woman writes that "women are weak because they have not that bracing education of mind and body that men receive. Women marry simply for a home, because they have not been trained to fight the battle of life for themselves, and because their lives are so dull and stagnant that they think any change must be for the better. And what misery does

a so-called love match end in ! Why, if girls had some real work in the world to do, they would not have time to imagine themselves in love with the first man who proposes." *True*

This is like nurse beating the ground because baby throws himself down. Woman's work is just as "real" as man's. Woman's education is not so scientific perhaps, but **it** is just as "bracing" as man's. Her catechism is just the same as his, and the only "bracing" path of education he ever receives.

As regards the higher aims of life, it is not very bracing to learn that a straight line lies evenly between its extreme points, nor that the two sides of a triangle are together greater than the third side ; and studies in Horace, Ovid, or even in Lucretius and Plato, are not very bracing. Fénelon and Pascal, Dante and Milton, whose books girls learn to read, are much more elevating and strengthening. But, because Fashion has for this age excluded Greek from a young lady's studies, women feel themselves "snubbed." They imagine that men's strength lies in their education. It does not. Education never made a fool wise—rather it gave him more ways in which to exhibit his folly. If the lady who wrote the above were to see the young simpletons who often take very fair honours at their Universities, she would not put all down to education.

As for love—well, to tell the truth, men fall in love and

women accept them. We are the victims. Hawthorne was quite right when he said, "It is a mistaken idea which men generally entertain that nature made women especially prone to throw their whole being into what is technically termed love.) When women have other objects in life, they are not apt to fall in love.") But is it not rather hard for men to be accused of misunderstanding women, and of using them unjustly, when it is to them that they have dedicated their noblest feelings, when they have gifted them with all that is chaste and beautiful. When they have elevated their idol into a goddess, it is hard that she should launch her thunders at the heads of her votaries. "I have heard men," says the lady above quoted, "sneer at women, and then say, 'I would not have them changed. I like them just as they are.' Heavens! are we always to be merely the petted favourites of men? Will they never be just to us? I suppose they cannot be so. Can we help hating our tyrants from our very souls." Surely this outburst proceeds from one who has been "snubbed."

Amongst nations, those that have been snubbed, or fancy that they have been, are too often the most cantankerous, opinionated, and unjust. There are two which offer cases in point---Ireland and America. We may at once express our opinion strongly that the non-residence of English sovereigns or princes in Ireland, and the apparent neglect of that country by the Crown, have been very grave

political errors which two or three hundred years of good government will not perhaps undo. We were speaking some time ago with a Connaught man, who was making money here by his trade, and who lived comfortably in England. He was a Fenian to the backbone, and said, openly, that he not only hated England but the English, although, as a rule, Englishmen had been much more just and friendly to him than his own countrymen. "Then," was our natural question, "why do you so hate this country, in which you have thriven?" "Well, sorr," he answered, "in the time of your Richard II.—" and the Irish provincialist heaped up slights and historical wrongs of five hundred years' standing, and flew into a hearty passion about matters of which a well-read Englishman never heard. Ireland was always "put upon"—never had her just position—was always regarded, he said, as the poor relation. It was perfectly useless to argue with him. From Richard II to Victoria, with the exception of James II., who came and asked her aid, all English sovereigns had neglected the "first gem of the sea." Perhaps, of all difficulties in our own immediate political world, the most serious is that now before, and ever before, the Queen's Ministers—that of governing Ireland so as to make the people content.

Americans of the United States have, so far as we can judge, pretty much the same feeling towards us. To the honour of George III. he welcomed the first American

ambassador from his revolted colonies with the words, "Sir, I shall be the first loyally to acknowledge the Minister of a Power which I have consistently opposed." Here was no "snub;" happy had it been for us if our people had followed the loyal example of their monarch! But for years and years afterwards there was a feeling amongst us, fostered and kept up by injudicious authors, that we were something very superior to the Americans. Even the wise Sydney Smith asked in the *Edinburgh Review*, "Who reads an American book?" The youngest amongst the nations was treated like the new boy at school, and was taken down many pegs. France, even in the throes of her Revolution, believed that she alone, and her General Lafayette, had enabled America to shake off the English yoke. She petted the great nation like a child; Voltaire received Franklin with the condescension of a monarch. But happily for France her language was not the same as her pupil's. What we do not understand cannot wound us. The same applies to Germany, who even now snubs America very bitterly. "What do you think, General," asked the American commander, Sheridan, "of our great victories in the North?—of Gettysburg, for instance? That must have afforded you some study." "Sir," answered the great strategist, Count Moltke, "we do not study the art of war from the hasty struggles of armed mobs!" From his point of view—since he carried on war as scientifically as he would play at chess

—Count Moltke was right; but we do not hear that the Americans resented the “snub.” It was not spoken in English.

Learned Americans, however, feel the sense of inferiority very acutely. Professor Lowell, whose study of English literature and whose scholarship generally would do honour to any Englishman alive, has written a very amusing paper on “A Certain Condescension in Foreigners”—that is towards Americans. He owns, fairly enough, that it is not alone England which snubs America. All the world does, more or less. He cites a German, who says plainly, “America is without arts, science, literature, culture, or any native hope of supplying them. It is a people wholly given to money-getting.” He himself owns that “we,” the Americans, “are the most common-schooled and the least cultivated people in the world. . . . The tone of the uncultivated Americans (it is Lowell who is speaking) has too often the arrogance of the barbarian—of the cultivated as often that of the vulgarly apologetic. Is there a politician amongst us who dare risk his future on the chance of our keeping our word with the exactness of superstitious countries like England? The patronizing manner of nations towards us is the result of their failing to see here anything more than a poor imitation, a plaster cast of Europe.”

This is bold and candid writing. Mr. Lowell owns that America feels the patronizing tone as a “snub.” “The good

old Tory aversion of old times was not hard to bear. There was something even refreshing in it. But," he adds, "it will take Great Britain a long time to get over her patronizing ways towards us. Our common language is a fatal instrument of misapprehension." And, talking to "dear old mother-in-law" (why not "mother"?), "England," he concludes: "Put on your spectacles, dear madam. Yes, we have grown, and changed likewise. You would not let us darken your doors if you could help it. We know that perfectly well. But, pray, when we look to be treated as men, don't shake that rattle in our faces, nor talk baby to us any longer—

" 'Do, child, go to it grandam, child ;
Give grandam kingdom, and it grandam will
Give it a plum, a cherry, and a fig !' "

These instances will be sufficient, we think, to show the dire effects of the "snub" in political life. In social life the practice has effects as bad. Perhaps the things which most bitterly hurt us are the slights and snubs which we have submitted to, although they who insulted us had, perhaps, not the slightest intention of so doing; for one of the peculiarities of the practice is that it is most effectively indulged in without the artist knowing or intending that he or she snubs. Smith is left out of Brown's party—snub No. 1. Brown intended to ask him, and his wife apologizes; she is "so sorry," and she was aware, she tells a third person,

how glad Mrs. Smith would have been to come, and how she would have enjoyed herself"—snub No. 2, and more bitter. Brown hopes Smith is not offended—snub No. 3. Why should he be offended? One might aggravate the snubbing, and lengthen the list almost indefinitely. And one remembers a snub through life. We knew an eminent lawyer, a man of many triumphs, whose most poignant hatred was against the junior partner of the firm he was articled to, for once telling him to enter at the clerk's door. The old gentleman of eighty thrilled with an insult sixty-four years old.

Women are perhaps quite unaware how often they sever friendships and make enemies of their husbands' friends by unconscious snubbing. We all of us remember the old gentleman who, when we were boys, always shook hands by extending two fingers only; and the kindly Mentor who assured us that we were "boys, and boys were always silly." It is to be hoped that we have long since forgiven both. Did Lord Byron ever pardon his mother for not discovering that he was a genius almost before he left off pinafores? Alas, no! One remembers these trifles with bitterness; and perhaps the only way to excuse the feeling is to reflect upon the littleness of poor Human Nature, while we determine never ourselves to depress or outrage the feelings of others.

XXII.

GENEROUS APPROVAL.

THERE is a great deal of the child yet remaining in every man, and that singular animal Man has a habit of being governed by his weaknesses.

It is a common observation this. All truth is common enough if we could but see it; but this truth forces itself upon us at a very early period. The mother praises and chirrup to her child to keep it in a good humour, though it has not had many months of life; and the old nurse flatters her patient with some tender gossip, some familiar assertion of being and looking better, although she well knows that he has not a month to live. Soldiers or sailors, young curates or students of chemistry, students of poetry or the exact sciences, love to find out that their conduct has at least merited approval.

This desire of pleasing and of receiving a delightful sensation from the knowledge of having pleased is very beneficial, and is not altogether a weakness. "We are

all excited by the love of praise," says Cicero, "and it is the noblest spirits that feel it most." If it be a vice, it is one of those which Rochefoucauld has said is very much like a virtue. Peel asked to be remembered as one whose life of statesmanship had culminated in the one fact that he had "brought a cheap loaf to the cottage of the poor man;" and Hood tenderly wished that on his tombstone should be inscribed but one sentence—"He sang the Song of the Shirt." Of course the truest philosophy, and the truest or noblest form of religion, do equally bid us be silent about ourselves. What we have done, we have done. Human approval!—the mistaken good opinion, it may be, of A, B, and C, matters little to any one of us. What does matter is, the unmistakable approval of our own conscience—and of God. But we are not all philosophers, and human approval will always have its effect upon the young, and even upon the stern middle-aged and the old. Not every one of us is strong enough—so weak a thing is poor humanity—to know when he is right, unless somebody else tells him so; or he fancies that he does not know, which amounts to the same thing.

This humiliating confession is quite true, yet not so very humbling to the young as it is to the old. The young confessedly want guidance; and in spite of the imprudence and inaptitude of what is called a "fast," but which will, by posterity, be stigmatized as a very slow and dull age,—

in spite of this, they naturally look for it from the old. You may depend upon it that in those countries where the old are despised and treated with rudeness and levity, as some travellers say they are in America, the old people first began the downward march by spoiling the young, and themselves abdicating their self-respect. Out of the Ten Commandments, which we know to be inspired and to be true, let the young remember that there is one—"Honour thy father and thy mother;" and that no nation, no people, ever grew or continued to be great, without due respect being shown to the old. Age and experience are not to be bought. The young man feels that he cannot have known so much nor have felt so much as the old. It was a pretty sight when all the valiant warriors—Achilles, the wise Ulysses, the king of men, Agamemnon, and the rest, arose and stood uncovered before Nestor, the wisest, because the oldest of the Greeks.

It was a wise and gracious thing for our Sovereign and the Prince Consort to rise and stand, with deep respect upon their countenances, before the many years of the great Duke of Wellington; great in council, great in war; whose eighty summers had been spent in fighting more than one hundred pitched battles for the English crown and the English people, and of whose eighty winters very few had not been given to thought for the cause of that land he loved so well. And a good white head it was; very white, bent

forward, as ready to salute a private soldier as a general ; mostly quiet and silent, but when moved to speak, charged with weighty words. Thackeray tells us that Major Pendennis, an old man of the world, met this excellent man, his old general, as he went through the park, and stood up at the salute. The duke, seeing an old gentleman and an officer, stopped and said a few pleasant, gracious words to him, and all the day afterwards the major walked about as if the heels of his boots were at least an inch taller. Was the man a snob, therefore? Not a bit of it. The approval of his old general fired him. "*Lætus sum laudari me abs te, pater, laudato viro,*"—to be praised by him who is worthy of praise, is to have one's heart moved by a noble desire and an honest pride. The young feel it just as much as did Major Pendennis. Every baby that lives to five years of age has that feeling in his heart, and hungers for the honest and open approval of his father ; and if, at the proper time, the father will express that, if he will show his son that his career, his feelings, his troubles, his little triumphs and defeats, are not indifferent to him, you may depend that in his turn the son will show respect to the father. When, if indeed it ever is the case—which in sober charity we take leave to doubt—when a young colonial chick, an Australian "corn stalk,"* or a Yankee farmer,

* The name they give young Australian-born children who are very tall.

calls his father "a darned old fool," and tells him to "dry up," one may depend on it that the fault lay at first with the parents of the ungracious boy, although, Heaven knows, he is himself to blame, and sorely enough too.

As a governing power, people will find that gentle and just praise, or that which we have chosen to call open approbation, is much better than a continual shower of blame. It is the old story of the traveller who pulled his cloak all the tighter about him when the wind tried to get it from him, but who took it off and threw it away when the warm and genial sun smiled on him.

The miserably stupid way in which some persons continually blame and scold their servants and children, cannot be too much condemned. The children cry for bread, and they get a stone. Their little hearts are hungering for some honest, kindly praise, and they hear nothing but ungracious "nagging." John has not done this, or that he has done badly. Mary has not brought up the dinner to a minute, or has spoilt the asparagus. But John and Mary never hear a word of praise for the three hundred times out of the year that everything is well done, and the dinner served most admirably. "Please, mum," said a servant, "I can't please you, and I wish to leave; I'm very sorry, mum, because I could do anything in the world for the master." And why? Because the master, being a kindly man of the world, had spoken fairly, and thanked the poor, serving fellow-being

when she ran on an errand for him, or brought up his boots well blackened and polished.

It was a rule with Lord Chesterfield, a man of the world, not half so black as some moralists have painted him, that the least person about you deserved consideration, kind words, gracious looks, and, in one word, politeness. "That hanger-on of the court, that page of the back-stairs," said he, "may do you an infinite deal of harm; he knows what you do not know; always be civil and obliging to him." And in his letters to his son you find him carrying out this systematically. He blames the boy for his faults, but he always praises him for that which he thinks wise and right. Take care, he says, to deserve praise, and I shall always give it you. Be learned—his lordship is writing to a boy of only nine years of age—and you will deserve the praise of the learned. "An ignorant fellow," he goes on to say, "is insignificant and contemptible; nobody cares for his company, and he can be just said to live, that is all. There is a very pretty French epigram upon the death of such an ignorant, insignificant fellow, the sting of which is, that all that can be said of him is that he was once alive, and that he is now dead. This is the epigram, which you may get by heart:—

" 'Colas est mort de maladie,
Tu veux que j'en pleure le sort?
Que diable veux-tu que j'en dis:
Colas vivait, Colas est mort.' "

Which we may thus put into English verse for the benefit of those who have not had his lordship's advantages :—

Colas by sickness done to death !

You ask how is it I've not cried ?

What for ? By Jove, I'll spare my breath :

Once Colas lived, and—Colas died.

His lordship concludes his letter by assuring the little boy that, if he turns out a dull fellow, he will earn the name of Colas, "which I will certainly give you, if you do not learn well ;" but he promises him a very different and more honourable name, if he only will continue to deserve honour.

There are two important sections of society that are very much affected by a generous and open approbation, and who will continue to be so affected as long as the world exists. These are women and artists. By artists we mean all those who have to gain their living by the exercise of their imaginative faculties, such as authors, actors, painters, singers of a high fame, and some few others, draughtsmen and designers, and that large section of society which is made in these days to depend upon the richer and moneyed classes.

Women, the larger, and truly the better half of mankind, have a love of approbation strongly marked in their characters. You can see it in the grace they so readily assume ; you can read it in their love of dress. You may

call this a weakness if you will ; you may try to repress it by making the nun cut off her hair, and cover herself with a garment of black ; or the Quakeress dress, in a poke bonnet and the ugliest disguise that can afflict humanity. You may try to drive out nature at the point of a bayonet, but depend upon it she will assert her strength again and again, and drive out the invader. The very nuns will wear their hideous *cornettes* with a grace, and the Quakeress will contrive to look pretty. Had we not better call this love of approbation a strength ?

You may depend upon it that that which God Almighty has universally planted is right. Man, in his impudent follies, might take to cutting off the horns of oxen, as he has done the ears and tails of dogs, and to repressing the endearing sympathies of children and women, and fancy that he was improving nature. He might quarrel with granite for its hardness, and loam for its friable softness. He might and does do all this, but if he be wise he will not build his house of loam, nor sow his corn upon a floor of granite. He had better polish the one and cultivate the other, and study the uses of the qualities which God has given to each "after his kind."

Now, womankind and the artistic nature love praise, because they find in it the due reward for honest endeavour. Lower natures may be content with money. (The tradesman may coin his soul for half-pence, and wait, with the patience

of a spider, for the coming of a customer ; the barrister may sell his eloquence, and be satisfied if he gains a cause and earns the applause of the judge ; the inventor may be satisfied with an ample fortune ; but the woman who loves, and the artist who works for the good of the world and the love of his work, can only be satisfied, the one with the approbation of those whom she loves, the other with the evanescent and shadowy thing called fame.

It was ordained from the beginning, no doubt, that poor humanity should count amongst its bitterest disappointments and trials those borne by these two classes. How many women are there now suffering from the want of a kindly love, a sweet appreciation of their goodness and their self-sacrifice. (How often will not wives do tender and grateful offices, adorn the home with flowers, and make the cottage as neat as the nest of a bird ; dress their persons with elegance, and their faces with smiles, and find, as a reward for this, the stolid indifference of the block, or the stupid insensibility of the lower animal. "She was a woman," wrote one who knew her sex well, "a woman down to the very tips of her finger-nails, and what she wanted was praise from the lips that she loved. Do you ask what that meant? Did she want gold, or dress, or power? No ; all she wanted was that which will buy us all, and which so few of us ever get ; in a word, it was LOVE."

Yes, that is just it. It is these little signs, the fore-

running of kindness, the timely notice, the generous appreciation, the wise and kindly method of observing, that prove over. Else, without these, it is a *caput mortuum*. When the Grande Duchesse wishes Fritz, whom she has so madly fallen in love with, to reciprocate her passion, and that stupid corporal is blundering about the royal apartment in search of a hat peg whereon to place properly his cocked hat and feather, "*Mon Dieu!*" cries the duchess, in an agony of jealous chagrin, "*comme il aime son chapeau.*" That is the reflection many a good wife makes almost before the honeymoon is over.

"He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel force,
Little better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse."

And for years this will go on. Years of quiet agony, of unrequited affection, of looks of love unnoticed and unreturned; acts of kindness unseen, of eloquent, loving words passed over as unheard, of the very flowers of the heart of love trampled upon and despised. This is too often the history of marriage. Then gradually, as the caloric of the atmosphere is absorbed by an iceberg which floats down the German Ocean, and the flowers and fields of England wither and grow barren at its approach, so true love cools down, and life grows dull and worthless and barren, till young people wonder how such and such a couple have grown so quiet and so dull.

As it is in this life of married happiness (?) when fit

mates do not meet, so it is when the author or the artist misses the fame that he so dearly loves. A man may live on a good many years soured and embittered, but it is but a kind of half-existence that he lives. It may be for him the times are out of joint. It may be that a Supreme Artist creates time and opportunity, and from the dull breasts of the mob evokes sympathy for his genius. But it is certain that anti-poetic days exist, in which the very best writer in the world would get but scant measure of justice ; and if Pope lived at the present day, we very much doubt if any one would listen to his silver numbers and his happy moral truths. A satirist of the day has gone so far as to assert that if Shakspeare lived at present, in these days of burlesque and sensation, he would not get a living, but would in a rage burn his plays, condemned

“To beg, with written Hamlet in his hand,
From the dull ‘Row,’ along the duller ‘Strand ;’
On his cold hearth he’d sacrifice his scenes,
Or write for Moses or the Magazines.”

How many men of genius are there amongst us now, the history of whose life is in effect marvellously like that which the satirist has pictured ! How many a life passes like a day without sunshine, a year with a frosty spring, an unkindly summer, and a stinted harvest !

The remedy in this matter is simply good nature and tact, with less absorbing and dull selfishness. The age has

lately grown ruder and ruder, narrower and more narrow. Laugh, as superfine critics will, at Mr. Arnold, what we want is more sweetness and light; and we shall get this, not by a captious, criticizing method, but by a wise generosity and a wholesome praise of that which is good in the young, the impulsive, and in those who feel most. Mr. Daniel Quilp, in Dickens's story, was accustomed to make his presence felt by cruel nips, blows, and pinches, given to women and children. He was a spiteful dwarf, and an idiot to boot. Let our presence be felt by the gladness it creates, and our wisdom be shown, not by the sharpness of our blame, but by the generosity of our open approbation.

XXIII.

LIKES AND DISLIKES.

ONE of the most cruel things, and (as all cruel things are, to the natural and kindly human heart, difficult) one of the most difficult things for a young man or woman to make real to themselves is the fact that there will come a time when good friends will part, and really honest people will stand upon different sides of the way, opposed to each other, hating each other, having little or nothing in common with each other, and sacrificing friendship to principle.

All the walks of life have divergent alleys, down which, one by one, our friends go. You love A for a rough, manly, sensible, plain-spoken man, not refined, perhaps, not instinctively a gentleman, but honest. By-and-by comes a time when you defer your own opinion to this honest man's views ; and there comes another time, too, when you find that he holds entirely distinct views upon important matters, which are totally irreconcilable with yours ; and you can go no further together.

It is a very painful discovery this, to every man. In

political life it is always occurring; in religious life it is the same. Mr. Faber, a Protestant, wrote some years ago an excellent little book about Tractarian secession to Rome, and he warns earnest Anglicans about it. In a few months (or years is it?) he is Father Faber, a most determined Romanist, pledged to his utmost to destroy the Church of England! How about his more stable Protestant friends? Here was a divergence indeed. Could friendship pardon his secession? Sir Robert Peel, nurtured in the old Tory school of Protection—which the working men of France, America, and England now seem to think the true and wise school—is carried away by the eloquence of Cobden and Bright and the cheap loaf argument,—certainly a material, and wrong appeal, by the way—makes a pathetic speech, turns round upon his friends and repeals the Corn Laws, which he had sworn to defend. We do not here say that he did right or wrong, but we do say that to all his old friendships he must have bidden adieu. He “sold” the farmers, as they said. No wonder that they called him Judas, and that Mr. Disraeli pursued him with bitterness. Henceforward there must have been continued antagonism between the old loyal school of Tory and the new-fangled Conservative, just so far as they could conserve. So, in a late juncture, when one party sought, as some believe, desperately to wound the Church, clergymen wrote works calling upon people to remember that there are

“principles at stake ;” and it is because they think highly of those principles that they are so fierce and so earnest.

Men of the world, without principle, are astonished at the antagonism which religious men display. Luther’s friends, to save his life, implored him not to go and stand his trial. “You know,” said they in effect, “that they will entrap you, that their minds are made up against you : you will be caught, put in prison, perhaps be slain.” “Here stand I,” said Luther ; “and so help me God, I cannot do otherwise. If all the tiles on the house-tops were each one a devil ” (what a simile, if we consider the curiously high-pitched tiled roofs of the German towns at that time) “I would go.” And that grand, good man went.

Take the matter, if you like, politically and historically. Here is Brutus, the personal friend of Cæsar, called by him his son, so fond is he of him, but a lover of the old *régime*, the fine old republican times, when Rome was governed by great families, and had great liberties and great fame. Thus Brutus, a very noble Roman, a sad, thoughtful, painful man, pained at the political baseness and the worn-out aspect of the times, suddenly found that Cæsar, his general, his friend and patron, was plotting against Rome. This it was that threw them into opposite camps ; this it was that made the dagger of Brutus run through the heart of Cæsar. Brutus did not assassinate Cæsar ; Cæsar’s own acts did the deed. “Not that I loved Cæsar less, but Rome more,” said Brutus, in

his vindictory speech, preserved by Plutarch, and given with full spirit by Shakspeare. So, truly, King Charles placed his royal head on the block by his repeated treacheries, and by the discovery of Cromwell that his own head and those of his friends were promised to the axe whenever Charles should have power. So, too, our criminals do now-a-days most certainly execute themselves. Foolish people petition for their lives, and condone their offences ; but when a man has placed himself in antagonism to good—when corrupt himself he must corrupt others—the very best thing he can do is to die. There are times when, in the true sense, it is expedient that a man should die for the people. A leper is mercifully, not mercilessly, cast out, or he would infect the whole people. It is not cruel, it is merciful to knock a mad dog on the head. Now there are men who are infinitely more dangerous than mad dogs ; and the sooner the world, especially the world of silly philanthropists, learns what is cruelty and what is mercy, the better. Christ never preached *their* mercy, and His was the tenderest and kindest voice that ever stirred the pulsation of the all-embracing air. A student in dissection cut himself with his lancet ; he held it up to the demonstrator. “ Give it me,” said that gentleman. A clean knife and a sharp twinge did the work, and two joints of a live finger fell by the side of the dead body. How cruel, or how kind ? What says the Saviour in a like case ?—“ Cut it off and cast it from thee ; it is better——”

But we leave that whole passage to the consideration of politicians, and especially for those who wish to Americanize our criminal law, at a time when American thieves and murderers are getting so strong, that at New York citizens talk of appointing vigilance committees, proclaiming Lynch law, and shooting and hanging the thieves wherever they meet them. Which would be most merciful—Lynch law, or a true and honestly firm law which should not err on the side of mercy, but which, by punishing the guilty, should protect the guiltless?

In all such matters of opinion there will be divergence and antagonism. The great majority of mankind is so cowardly, that it never will face a plain duty; and if it can in any way escape by a side door it will. Mercy seems pretty and so kind, that many people believe that it must always be a virtue. No virtue in life is always one; and of this virtue Young has told us that sublime truth—

“A God all mercy is a God unjust.”

These antagonisms, however, proclaim the man. These are tests of character, and most certainly separate the sheep from the goats. The world would fall to a heap without them. They are what mountains are to the world, and a backbone to a fish; a dull flat level or a mass of pulp would be all that would be left without them. Milton declares that it was by the agency of sin that antipathies came into the

world ; and it follows that, if we were all angels, we should all love that which is good ; but still we doubt whether Milton is philosophical as well as poetical in this passage,—

“ Discord, first

Daughter of sin, among the irrational
Death introduced : through fierce antipathy
Beast now with beast gave war, and fowl with fowl,
And fish with fish ; to graze the herb all leaving,
Devour'd each other, nor stood much in awe
Of man, but fled him, and with countenance grim
Glared on him passing.”

Antipathy is as great a necessity as sympathy, and beasts requiring flesh food demand victims to supply that food. Nor is the behest cruel. Death must come by old age, or hunger, or want, or by being made a prey of ; and the latter is just as merciful as the others. The most melancholy thing in the world—and Shakspeare has, by his divine intuition, appropriated the simile—is an old lion, stiff, toothless, with his claws grown too long and too brittle to seize his prey. Unable to roam abroad and cater for himself, he lies surrounded by old bones at the entrance of his cave, and dies a slow death of poverty, ceaseless rage, and gnawing hunger. The fate of the lamb, suddenly snapped up in its brief and joyous youth, is happiness itself compared with that of the old lion.

In man antipathy plays its part as well as sympathy. It is eminently useful ; and as a mere matter of advice, we

should strongly urge all people to yield to both, or certainly to consult them, not only in food or diet, dress and habit, but in friends and acquaintance. It is an old nurse's saying, but a very true one, that if a person does not relish his food, and does not feel that it "does him good," it will not do him any good. So if a man does not feel drawn to another, he had best have little to do with him. One cannot force likes and dislikes. It is told of Dr. Chalmers that some of the very strongest temptations that he had to contend with were certain antipathies and aversions to people, which he formed because of their disagreeable peculiarities. Such a sensitiveness might be unfortunate for a Christian preacher; but we can readily understand that he may many a time have repented having conquered these antipathies. At any rate, in a long experience, we have never found any of these false. Having no undue aversions nor prejudices, and being perfectly ready to meet any man, all the more readily if he was a stranger, we have often had instinctive antipathies to men and their manners, we have seen that the face was low, mean, and cunning, and that the voice corresponded. But having, out of Christian duty, expelled these prejudices, and become familiar with such friends, we have invariably had to repent our intimacy. We had neglected a wholesome prejudice, and we suffered from it. If in the world men would listen a little more frequently to the voice of these naturally implanted monitors, it would be better for them.

It is only in the millennium that the lion will lie down with the lamb : as it is, we should very seriously advise the lamb to get as far away from the lion as he can. It is not that the lion is a bad fellow in his way—of late naturalists declare that he is a sneak, a prowling, cat-like assassin, an arrant coward, that a good tiger will beat him all to nothing ; but he has the reputation of being the king of beasts—still, on the whole, he is not good company for the lamb, and that creature may be pardoned for a little natural antipathy on his side.

The inner voice of Nature in these antipathies and sympathies, that low, sweet voice by which we are safely led along the path of life, Socrates heard and confessed, and he always listened to it ; indeed he refused to escape from prison, and to avoid death, because the voice had not spoken.

Of course there are many antipathies which appear ridiculous, and are unaccountable because we are not sufficiently aware of the secret springs of Nature. The assertion of Pope, that there were some men so fantastical that they would

“Die of a rose in aromatic pain,”

is quite true. Some persons dislike the smell of roses ; some faint and are overcome at the sight of white lilies ; and a disease which is well known, and distinctly traced to its cause, is hay-fever. When the hay is about, and the dry

grass is seeding, the pollen of the hay perfumes the air, and some persons—often farmers and the children of farmers—are stricken with a mixture of catarrh and asthma, acutely painful, affecting the mucous membrane and the brain. Probably many of the wonderful antipathies to the sight of trees, flowers, and herbs may have as plain and distinct a cause as this, did we but know it. But there are other instances of attraction and repulsion in the human breast, which we cannot so easily account for. They say that every baby, if put quietly into warm water, which would not shock its nerves, could swim, and would swim. We can neither affirm this to be true nor untrue. Man can do almost anything if he so wills it. Fear sends many a good fellow to the bottom ; but, would any baby handle a snake ? Is there not really an antipathy between man and such reptiles, dating from the time when God put enmity between the serpent and man. Brave as a man may be, he would not choose to handle an adder, nor to gambol with a cobra di capello. There is something very repugnant in the snake tribe ; even those water snakes, the eels, affect some persons in a strange way, and this not through education, but from a natural feeling. Boys, who are strange creatures, soon overcome their repugnance to snakes, and may be seen petting the harmless yellow and black snake of our fields ; and Hindoos will, as we know, remove the poison-bag of the most venomous whip snakes, and amuse themselves by putting the snake's head in their

mouth, or letting it nestle under their arms. Some women have a great abhorrence of worms, some of mice or of rats, many faint at the sight of blood; and great heroes have, even in moments of courage and trial, exhibited much that seemed puerile and cowardly, but which was the effect of prejudice or antipathies.

Not only are many antagonisms and prejudices perfectly reasonable and respectable, but all honest men and women must in their course of life be bound to undertake them. There does come a time when we are no longer allowed to be on a debatable ground. We must be a king's man or a commonwealth man; we must be on the side of vice or virtue; we must be either for God or for the devil. Politeness is a very nice thing, but strong earnestness is much better. When that time comes we must not be afraid of offending; no temporizing will do any good; we must declare our opinions firmly and faithfully; and if people like to say that we are prejudiced, and have antagonisms and antipathies, let them say so. We need not be ashamed of confessing, even in this day of small things, this hour of negation, this period of the fusion and confusion of creeds, that we are antagonistic to all that is not good, and have a very decided antipathy to things hurtful, and especially to the devil's regiment of the line, whether a man holds a commission in that corps, or serves in it merely as full private.

XXIV.

ON FALLING OUT.

IN one of the most agreeable papers in the *Tatler*, a work but seldom read at present, there is an account of two ladies—Lady Autumn and Lady Springly—at Epsom Wells. The very names of the persons and the place set you down at the beginning of the last century (anno 1709) in the midst of hoops, patches, flowered silks, powdered hair, lace ruffles, toupees, side curls, swords, high-heeled shoes, and broad-skirted coats.

The two good ladies of quality are staying at the watering-place we have named, and at a time when Epsom Wells was really the new queen of fashion. As the names indicate, Lady Springly is of the new school, Lady Autumn is of the old—a dame who knows her place and who she is ; “a person of good Breeding, Formality, and a singular Way practised in the last Age.” All last ages have the singular way in the eyes of their successors. What do we now think of the Springlys of 1709? Both these ladies are the wives of baronets, “both knights,” says Steele. Springly is the

spouse of the elder, who is a baronet ; and Autumn, being a rich widow, has taken his younger brother, and out of her purse endowed him with an equal fortune and a knighthood of the same order.

This fact points to the time when rich men could not only buy titles, but were often forced to do so, or fined for the omission, the fine going to the king.

So then the two knights-baronet and their ladies go to see a race at Epsom Wells. Several "damsels swift of foot are to run for a suit of head-clothes at the Old Wells," and the "governor of Epsom and all his court of citizens" (the mayor that is and the clerk of the course, &c.) are there assembled. A "brisk young spark," as sparks often do, sets fire to the glowing bosoms of the two ladies. He offers to conduct Lady Springly to her seat in the stand *first*; and this so disgusts Lady Autumn, who knows what precedence is, that she rushes back to her coach, drives to her husband, where, after the races are over, Lady Springly and all the considerable people come to tell her the result. "You know," says the *Tatler*, "a premeditated quarrel always begins with the words 'some people.' Therefore, as is natural, the elder of these ladies begins: 'There are people who fancy that if *some* people——.' Hereupon Springly takes her up: 'There are some people who fancy that if *other* people——' Then Lady Autumn cries, in her turn, 'People give themselves airs; but if *other* people who

make less ado could be as agreeable as *some* people.” And so the two ladies “nag” at each other until the elder boxes the younger one’s ears; the younger one returns the cuff; the two brother baronets interfere to protect their wives, and begin themselves to fight. Periwigs are knocked off, and cravats are torn; the governor and the rest of the citizens interpose; and according to the slip-knot of matrimony, which makes it law for husband and wife to draw together when they are attacked separately by others, “the two ladies and their husbands fell upon the rest of the company; and, having beaten all their Friends and Relations out of the House, came to themselves just time enough to know that there was no bearing the Jest after these adventures, and therefore marched off the next day. It is said,” Steele dryly adds, “that the governor had procured several legs of mutton (the celebrated Banstead mutton, then, as now, famous) and other dishes, exquisitely dressed, to bring them (the ladies) down again.”

This pleasant little story will show that rich and well-bred people quarrel, and how very much they are like low and vulgar people when they do so. All excitement equalizes people. Sentiment, anguish, joy, laughter, and tears, bring us down to the same level. A pit full of kings crying at a tragedy would be just as good or ill looking as a pit full of ’prentice boys. So when people quarrel in a violent way they are all vulgar alike, whether they be

duchesses or dowager cheesemongers from Drury Lane. What is true of one kind of life is true of the other. "One touch of Nature" (and passions reveal Nature) "makes the whole world kin."

Of all the avoidable causes of misery in this world, and there are a great many, quarrelling is the most fertile and the most deadly. There is truth in the old saw—"It takes two people to make a quarrel." That is, ordinarily two people; but one can commence it, or "pick it," as we say. Foxe, in his "Acts and Monuments of these Latter and Perilous Dayes" (the Book of Martyrs) tells us to have nothing to do "with the whole brood of such whisperers, railers, quarrel-pickers, corner-creepers, fault-finders, and spider-catchers, or by what name soever they are to be titled;" and it would be a happy thing if we could pass them by. But the nature of man will not allow it. Love, which mends quarrels, also increases them. "There are two kinds of quarrellers," says an old play, "your drunkards and your lovers. Your drunkard is quarrelsome; so is your lover." The reason is, because they are both under the influence of excitement, though of different kinds. The gentlest young lady of all England will pick a quarrel with her lover, especially if she is very fond of him, if only for the purpose of making it up. But if the unfortunate be too late at an appointment, if he be inattentive to her or attentive to another, then the dogs of war are let slip

indeed, and one of those sharp and bitter engagements called "lovers' quarrels" takes place, followed first by a sweet truce, and then too often by a more bitter quarrel. For the nature of mankind is this, that he—and especially she—will often delight in a boisterous quarrel, upon the very basis on which peace was to be built. "My darling," said a lover, "I will own I am in the wrong." "Oh you are, are you, sir? Then you must be guilty if you own that;" and forthwith the old reproaches were renewed, and the lady indulged in the luxury of making herself and the one whom she loved supremely unhappy. There is a story of a separation which took place because a husband said, "My dear, here is a little present I have brought to make you good-tempered." "Sir," was the indignant reply, "do you dare to say that it is necessary to bribe me into being good-tempered? Why, I am always good-tempered: it is your violent temper, sir!" And so the quarrel went on. Whatever we are conscious that we are ourselves most guilty of, we impute to others.

What pleasure ordinary persons can find in constant wranglings it is hard to say; possibly it may be the satisfaction of having a pretext for saying that the persons they disagree with ill-use them. There are many who are like the celebrated Chuzzlewit family, which never met without having a "regular row" all round; and the excellence of Dickens's picture, drawn as it was from nature, will be seen

if we compare it with our own families. In our own circle, let us say, which is of course a very peaceful one, there is an Uncle George who objects to an Aunt Eliza, or a Mrs. Smith-Brown, who looks down upon certain younger Browns "who never ought to have come into the family, you know." The firebrand of the clan, who, having a tremendous temper, gets his or her own way, is of course unjustly deferred to. The lamb among us who gives the party, and who is delighted, and never so much delighted as when he assembles them all together, usually gushes with some homely sentiment, as "How delightful it is to be all together! How well Aunt Eliza looks!" "Some people may think so," cries the firebrand, and the querulous temper shows itself, and the quarrel begins. It is usually on the most foolish trivial matter: a point of etiquette, the better place, being served first at the family feast. And then, as vulgar people say, "the fat's in the fire," it blazes up, and peace flies away. As a rule, family parties are a mistake, especially if the family be large. Some are not asked, others are not introduced to the chief guest; the professing lamb, who says, "Never mind me, old fellow, put me anywhere," is stung to madness because he has not had the best bed-room, or the seat at the right hand of the hostess; the children have remarked that Mr. Smith-Brown is growing bald or getting stout, or the servants have taken away Aunt Jane's plate—Aunt Jane has an appetite—just as she

was about to finish the tender morsel she had saved for a last *bonne bouche*. "The way I lost my fortune, sir—my uncle had left it me—was this," said one. "I gave a family party. Uncle was there, and all the rest of us ; all were so civil to the old gentleman that he got bored, and I finished the matter by giving him the liver wing of a roast fowl, when he preferred the breast and the thigh of a boiled turkey. He had set his heart on that turkey, and he altered his will." Says the Psalmist, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity !" It is because it is a very rare thing, that the inspired writer makes a note of it.

As life is constituted, these discordant interruptions must come, like other offences. After they have come—and woe to those by whom they come—most of us can see how trivial and foolish are their causes. But we all of us must quarrel many times in our life. It is the essence of wisdom, of course, to—

"Beware

Of entrance to a quarrel ; but being in,

Bear it, that the opposed may beware of thee."

And upon reflection, if we are wise, we shall find that the best thing we can do when we are in a quarrel is to get out of it as soon as we can. Generally, like wars, which are quarrels on a large scale brought to a bloody head, they offer many times opportunities of escape. When the Franco-

German war was declared there were two several occasions upon which Napoleon III. might have retired with honour: one, when the Prince of Hohenzollern withdrew from his candidature to the throne of Spain; one, when the King of Prussia gave a pacific answer to the demands of France. A peaceable sovereign is always a wise one. Had Napoleon been really wise, he might have concluded with merely a show of war, and have plumed himself and the French nation on his magnanimity and his bloodless victory. As it is, he and the nation had to put up with many disastrous defeats, and the Napoleon of Peace was only about as peaceful as that character in Charles Reade's novel, who cries "I am a man of peace; and, damme, I'll punch any man's head for a halfpenny."

Quarrelsome and angry people are unlike iron; they are worse, says Fuller, "to be wrought upon when they are hot." And such persons are generally unjust, full of self-seeking and self-opinion, arrogant, and not seldom unfor-giving. When two such come together as husband and wife, their whole life will be poisoned by senseless, vain wrangling; for to quarrel with any one is a grave offence. There is a wise observation of Goldsmith's which should be remembered by such irritable persons. "Whatever," he says, "mitigates the woes and increases the happiness of others is a just criterion of goodness; and whatever injures society at large, or any individual in it, is a criterion

of iniquity. One should not quarrel with a dog without reason sufficient to vindicate one through all the courts of morality."

Irritable and querulous persons are just as much to be avoided as small pox or scarlet fever. There are mental epidemics, which are terribly dangerous, and quarrelling is one of them. We are almost sure to catch it if long exposed to its contagion. A man should wisely avoid a woman as a wife who has been brought up in a narrow family with mean and unhappy views of things, who are ever ready to envy and find fault with their neighbours, and to quarrel among themselves. Such a family is to be avoided, and so too is the tempting part of interfering in a "row," especially if we do not accurately know its origin. Whatever side we take in such a case, we are sure to offend one party, and most likely both, for the "benevolent neutral" never espouses either side as warmly as he might do. Gay's homely verse should ever be a beacon light for all peace-loving people—

"Those who in quarrels interpose,
Must often wipe a bloody nose,'

especially if the dispute be a family one, between relations or between husband and wife.

But after all that has been and will be said against this iniquitous folly, there is much to be said, by all of us, too, against the cold-blooded, peaceable fellow who never "gets

into a row," submits to everything, and keeps himself cool while others are at the boiling point. No doubt it is scriptural to advise a man when he is slapped on one cheek to turn the other, and if he is robbed of his coat to let the thief take his cloak also. Practically we believe that the wisdom of such a course would be vindicated; but the world is by far too selfish and uncivilized to bear the practice. What man of us is there who would, after a thief had stolen his wrapper from his hall, open his wardrobe and say, "Sir, behold, there are my waistcoats, my best black coat, and my go-to-meeting trousers." What generous people like is one who can quarrel when occasion serves, and, after expressing himself warmly, can easily forgive—a man who, like the noble Brutus, "carries anger as the flint does fire," but never shows the gleaming spark until sharply struck. And there are some wise men who have vindicated, as we often try to do, the right to be angry. "Be angry, and sin not," is Holy Writ; and quaint Andrew Fuller says that "anger is one of the sinews of the soul; he that wants it hath a maimed mind, and, with Jacob, sinew shrunk in the hollow of his thigh, must needs halt. Nor is it good to converse with such as cannot be angry, and, with the Caspian Sea, never ebb nor flow." If, therefore, occasion serve to have a quarrel with any one, the best plan is to do it and have done with it. Do not nurse your wrath to keep it warm. Do not chew the cud of bitter revenge,

and when your opponent has forgotten the circumstance, pop out upon him like a masked mitrailleuse and blow him to pieces with a hundred reproaches. This is unfortunately too often the manner of women, and a fruitful cause of matrimonial misery. Anger kept till the next morning is like the manna of the Jews, or shell-fish at Midsummer. It will putrefy and corrupt; it will injure and poison; it rankles in the mind of the angry one. "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath," is merciful as well as spiritual, for as one we have quoted says—he cites from Ephes. iv. 27, though not in the exact words—"He that keepeth anger long in his bosom giveth place to the devil. And why should we make room for him, who will creep in too fast of himself?"

Why indeed? The miserable result of undue anger and quarrelling, a result always to be deplored, and yet always sure to come with constant indulgence, is, that we sometimes, in a moment, and when least thought of, do what we never forget, always regret, and never can undo. At first we are bitter and reproachful, but we rule our tongues and the breach is healed; the divergence again brought home, the gulf bridged over. We are like Samson: we fall, our secret is known, and our hair cut, but it grows again, and our strength returns; but after some bitter quarrels we in our blindness are like Samson with his eyes put out. Our hair may grow again, but our eyes never.

And so it is with a friend : a slight disturbance of love, a disagreement, a coldness, and angry quarrel—and the word is said, seldom forgiven, never forgotten, and the friend is lost for ever !

XXV.

PRETENSION AND SENTIMENT.

NEITHER of these are very openly prominent in the present day ; in fact, the vice is to pretend to be without pretence, and to affect to despise sentiment. But we need scarcely say they are as powerful as ever, especially in religious or serious families, and they will be for ever powerful. There is always a sneaking kindness for a neat sentence. When Joseph Surface, in the comedy, has hidden Lady Teazle behind the screen, her husband, little knowing the cheat, declaims to him on the beauties of sentiment. "The heart," says the hypocritical Joseph, "that is conscious of its own integrity is ever slow to credit another's treachery." Thus he pretends to repudiate the notion that his innocent brother can be the offender of whom Sir Peter is in search. "Oh !" cries the unsuspecting husband, "true ; but your brother has no sentiment—you never hear him talk so." When, however, the screen falls, and the silly but not guilty wife is discovered, and the hypocrite is unmasked, Sir Peter does not think so much of fine speeches. "The man,"

cries Joseph, endeavouring to palliate his guilt, "who shuts out conviction by refusing to hear——" "O d—— your sentiment!" cries the enraged knight, and hurries away from the convicted hypocrite.

That scene of the dramatist is so true to life, that we have occasion to recall it every day. People have, for some time, learnt to "damn" sentiment very heartily; and yet on the library shelves of almost every country house we have "The Beauties of Sentiment," "The Man of Feeling," "The Sentimental Journey," and other works in which sentiment plays a very pretty part. To be sure, also, we have some authors of the present time who have taken sentiment under their care, and have given us sentimental highway-men and philosophic murderers, who rob a man with a neat sentence, and murder him with a smile of pitying and supreme philosophy. When Eugene Aram defends himself for murdering Daniel Clarke, he does it sentimentally. "What," he seems to say, "what (oh, you mean hunks!) have you to do with riches? I love the Beautiful, the Free, the Lovely (all with big letters). I bow to the Shrine of Knowledge. I am a pupil of Philosophy; you are a dense and stupid Ass."

And as the about-to-be-murdered person very selfishly objects to give up all his moneys, the sentimental murderer kills him. Of course, as Thackeray says with a sneer, the above is a nice doctrine for the worshippers of the Beautiful

and the True ; but it does not do for the world. The mere plodder, who makes his money honestly, objects to have it knocked out of his hand by a conceited prig, who fancies he can use it better than he can. Again, sentimental highwaymen rob a Mr. Jones, who is a very rich fellow, to relieve Mr. Brown, who is a very poor fellow ; and somehow consider that they are doing God service, forgetting the words spoken by the prophet, "I, the Lord, hate robbery for a burnt-offering."

From Robin Hood downwards this seems to have been always the case. A man does wrong and invests it with "sentiment ;" and the common people, who (bless their innocent hearts !) always find something to excuse sinners, believe in them ; nay, people quarrel about the precedence and importance of their rogues :—

"A famous man was Robin Hood,
The English ballad singer's joy ;
But Scotland has a thief as good :
She has, she has her own Rob Roy."

And so, Red Robert and Robert, Earl of Huntingdon, in ballad history, dispute the headship of roguery ; whereas, in police cases of the present day, they would have figured as a couple of disreputable sheep stealers and cattle-lifters, who deserved hanging. Sentiment, in fact, has made thieves heroes of romance before now, and will do so again.

What is this sentiment, then? Sentiment is feeling, and as a rule is opposed to reason. A man who acts by sentiment acts as a woman, and reasons, not from his head, but from his heart. Now, when the man's heart is better than his head, which is not an uncommon case at all, this is very well; but when a man's heart is deceitful beyond measure, when his opinion is biased unfairly by his feeling, when self enters into all his calculations, it is as well to call in the aid of reason; for, though it may seem paradoxical, some of the most sentimental people have been the most cruel and terrible. The sentimentalism of Rousseau nobody would dispute; and yet can any one hold up such a man to anything but contempt and detestation? Diderot, again, was a man of sentiment; and Robespierre also had intense and acute sentiment; so good that, when young, he was a continual advocate for the poor, and without taking any money from them, he spent days and nights in their service. At last sentimentalism, logically produced, drove him into the most cruel excesses. "We must not mind cracking eggs," said he, "when we want an omelet;" and truly he cracked eggs enough, if we count the heads he cut off.

With us Sterne, the author of "The Sentimental Journey," is the representative man of this kind of literature, and we are told that he cared more for a dead ass than he

did for a live wife or mother. But Sterne is a much misrepresented man. Although he was one of the greatest masters of thought, suggestion, and style that ever lived, a bitter envy has pursued him, and the critics seem to hate him because they cannot understand him. Dickens, again, is a thoroughly sentimental writer. Tom Pinch, the Nicklebys, brother and sister, the Cheerybles, the Dedlocks, and a whole tribe of his people, from Trotty Veck upwards, are sentimentalists ; his very ghosts are sentimental. All his characters are either sentimentalists or pantomimic, or both, which is frequently the case. Even old Scrooge, when he gets rid of his sentimental miserdom, becomes sentimentally generous, and sends a little boy to buy the biggest turkey and the biggest pudding, and so on, to give it to the poor family he has been starving by under-paying the father. Sentiment is not very healthy. Mrs. Dombey runs away with Mr. Carker, not because she loves him, for she hates him with a most bitter hate, but because she dislikes the cold manners of her too respectable husband. In fact she cuts off her nose to spite her face, which is the very essence of sentiment. Stupid as this feeling is, it is all-powerful. It would be absurd and untrue to say that people like Mrs. Dombey have not existed, when we meet with them every day. There are an immense number of sentimental murderers, people with spoiled tempers, whom a good whipping, or

at most ten good whippings when young, would have cured. Thus Mr. George Victor Townley,* finding that a young lady does him grievous wrong in first accepting and then rejecting him, quietly—like an educated gentleman as he was—ascertains this from her own lips, then cuts her throat, follows the body home, sentimentally weeping, takes a meal with the grandfather while the police are sent for, is condemned for murder, and sentimentally, as we hold, pardoned or sentenced for life ; and finally, knowing that the law won't kill him, kills himself by jumping down a well staircase in prison. The man as a scholar and a son was good. He was sober, temperate, and chaste ; a firm lover as we have seen, honest, industrious, patient, able to live on little, an admirable citizen, and a gentleman. He wept as he slew his victim ; gave no man trouble, aided the police and the warders, knew exactly where, how, and what he was doing anything for, but was unable to discriminate that the woman who had first encouraged, and then had thrown him off, was worthless, and that he for her was throwing a valuable life away. Had he at school been taught patience, and a proper control over disappointment, his sad history would never

* Some of our readers may remember that Mr. Townley was a gentleman of position and education, who deliberately murdered his sweetheart, gave himself up, and as deliberately had tea with the girl's grandfather while a policeman was being fetched.

have been written, nor would he have rushed into the presence of his Maker with two murders on his head,—those of two whom he best loved, himself and his sweet heart.

Sentiment, Skinner says, is a new word, but it is not so now nor was it then. Chaucer uses it as we use it, or rather as we ought properly to use it. “I here this endite of no *sentimente*, not as my own thoughts, not as my own invention, but from the Latin.” That is, he did not arrange and think out the plot of the story, nor was it born of his heart and feeling, but he *re-lated* from the Latin. Derived from *sentir*, to perceive, to feel, the sentiment grew to mean rather an intuition than a cold effort of reason. And in this way a sentimental passion, a love for what we admire, was always presumed to be a grand one. Not to the coldly reasoning world, not to the jargon of the schools, nor the stilled and quieted murmur of the priests, would all listen; the young and the ardent still obeyed the dictates of the heart, and still believed that which it taught them. And they were in many cases right.

“ Thanks to the human heart, by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, its fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.”

So sings Wordsworth; and who will dare to gainsay his

teaching? Poets will always be sentimental in the true sense; if they were so in the false sense they would cease to be manly.

True feeling of this kind is always delightful. Thus Mackenzie is quite right when he says, "In books, whether moral or amusing, there are no passages more captivating than those delicate strokes of sentimental morality which refer our actions to the determination of feeling." The romantic school, the very essence of tragedy, does this. It is by the heart and feeling, not through the head, that we are terrified, appalled, spell-bound, and entranced at a tragedy. What to us are the wrongs of Desdemona, and the slights and scorns of Hamlet, but thorough sentiment? In reality, did we, like the Hindoo and the contemplative Brahmin, deaden every feeling in Positivist Quietism, we should accept everything as good. ("Let God govern the world," we should say; "let this man die or that man reign in glory; let the rogue flourish, and the villain rule; an after life will make these odds all even. There is no paid lawyer in the court of God; there each must plead his cause, and the damning acts of life will bear witness against him.") But we are enlisted on the side of that which we think or know to be good; we are mere puppets in the hands of the philosophic Master Shakspeare, who knows how to mix the finest reflections with the most subtle sentiment. But in real life, that which enlists us on the side of the virtuous man in the

play, enlists us on what we believe to be the right side. While the actor declaimed, says a modern verse writer—

“ Among the crowd new hero feelings ran,
And the slave listen'd till he rose a man.”

But while the political writer is exercising his pen, we are entangled in the meshes of the sophistry he spreads, and take our side without exactly knowing whether he is right or not. In the Russian War of 1852-4 the hearts of the whole people were enlisted on the side of the Turks and against the Russians through mere sentimentalism. We do not say that it was not right. Most of us felt and thought and wrote on the side of our countrymen, and many rose early, and ran with others full of ardent feelings, by the side of the Guards as they marched over Waterloo Bridge. What a shaking of hands there was ! How the officers kissed the dear girls who came to see them off ! and how the grim old sergeants gazed with moist eyes at the boys and girls who would never greet them more !

The time is past now. Those gallant men lie dead beneath Crimean snow. Somebody blundered and hundreds were starved. The men and officers fought like heroes, shoulder to shoulder ; and nothing was more touching than the constant instance of an officer jumping out, running along the open, and carrying off a wounded soldier from under the fire of the enemy, or of a soldier so carrying his officer. Perhaps it was well that we so fought, and spent so

many millions; but there are many acute reasoners who believe that, had we listened to Russia, and put pressure on the Turk, we might now have been governing Egypt wisely and well, and employing thousands of our poor, giving the fellahs and native Christians sound and wholesome laws, repressing the Moslem; while the Russians, seated on the Bosphorus, would have made Constantinople the seat of the Patriarch, restored St. Sophia to what it was built for (a cathedral), would have driven the Turks into Asia Minor, and have saved the long threatened attack upon our Eastern empire. But the war was inevitable, in spite of the grief of Lord Aberdeen, the English Prime Minister, and our rulers, because of the sentiment of the people. So was it in that other extraordinary *émeute*, wherein, by the death of one million excellent and intelligent whites in America, the disruption of society, and the inception of a military autocracy, three millions of not intelligent blacks were given to an abused freedom, and a very probable starvation. The South lost the battle because it did not appeal to the *senti-*
ment of Europe by freeing the slaves. The North did play that card, and won.

No one can afford to despise sentiment; but most of us despise sentimentalism. "Since the close of what we may call the Byronic period of our literature," says Douglas Jerrold, "there has been an increasing reaction against the school of sentiment. This reaction, we conceive, is at pre-

sent carried to excess. In the recoil from the morbid and falsely heroic are we not falling into the opposite error of considering everything morbid that aspires to be heroic?" "Men who fight the battle of right without calculating the odds, women who rate men by their manhood rather than by their bankers' accounts are, thank God, nowise rare. By a law of natural magnetism, they draw round them all that is best and healthiest in the sympathies of others; while in themselves they have the abiding youth which creates joy where it does not find it, and gains strength and trust from adversity." Excess of this emotion, which is its bane, has its origin in laziness; "the hand of little employment hath the more delicate sense," and the head which is little exercised with knowledge will run into the strangest vagaries. One could make the ladies of a village weep by a picture of the nakedness of the benighted savage, or of the sad condition of the poor things because they had not flannel jackets and pocket-handkerchiefs; but the knowledge that niggers in their natural state are a great deal too hot in their bare skins, and dispense generally with the finical custom of blowing their noses, might correct the effusion of maidenly tears. If people had clearness of vision and faith in the Over-ruling Power, there would be but little foolish sentiment. God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb; and there is no position in life that has not its advantages and its pleasures. Perhaps the nigger, when he sees the white man at the Line

panting with the heat which blacks enjoy, pities him; certainly he is sentimental over our white skins, for he makes his devil of our colour, as if the complexion of Apollo were an odious livery! ¶When Lady Mary Wortley Montague went into the Turkish harem, the wives of the Turk crowded round the lady, and playing, laughing, and full of fun, hurried her to the bath, where she saw so many beautiful forms that she quite forgot the faces of those beauties who urged her to bathe with them. But, in undressing her, they came to her stays, and recoiled with horror! Then it was that they wept and grew sentimental. (In this prison of iron and whalebone, then, it was that European husbands of the West confined their hapless wives! Nothing that the lady could do could save her from this sentimental pity. Who was most in the right? It is not difficult to decide. Lady Mary preferred travelling abroad—one wife with one husband, and shutting up her ribs with stays; the Sultanas were content with being shut up at home—many wives with but a small share of one husband. Knowledge may correct sentiment, for the degree of human happiness depends upon ethical rules; but sentiment can also correct knowledge, for the tenderest feelings arise from the heart.

XXVI.

FALSE PRETENCES.

A LADY of education and intelligence lately offered to a firm of publishers some moral tales for children. The tales, we presume, were neither very striking nor very original, and would never have been cited here but for one memorable plea in their favour. The lady was a Roman Catholic, the publishers strictly Protestant; but that had nothing to do with the stories or their rejection. The plea that the lady urged, and that the bookseller looked on with great favour, was this: "My dear sir, there is not one farthing's-worth of religion in the stories at all!—not a sentence, not a word. It is all purposely excluded."

"Exactly so, madam," said the publisher; "an excellent idea. I shall most gladly place the work in the hands of my reader. We are deluged with religious stories. We want something else, moral and pretty, but without Scripture citations."

"Precisely, my dear sir,—my own idea," cried the lady. "You see, I found out all this from seeing many children

and finding out how they loathe all this. A little boy came to his mother the other day with a religious story-book and said, 'Oh, mamma, do give me another book.' 'Why, my dear, it's all about the Sav——' 'Yes, I know it is,' whimpered the child, 'and that's why I hate it. *I'm sick of Jesus !*' "

A dreadful story, you say ; yet a true one, and not dreadful. We must face the truth. Here is a little child using the same thought, almost the same words, as did Voltaire on his deathbed. Voltaire, an abbé, a priest himself, nay a bishop, some say, turns away from the officiating and officious priest who pesters him at his bedside, and almost in the agonies of death cries out, "*I'm sick and tired of this perpetual cry ; ne parlez pas de cet infame !*" The allusion was to our Saviour. No one has attempted to vindicate Voltaire's last saying, though we might easily presume that the philosopher said *enfant* (child) instead of *infame*,—the Mighty and Righteous Judge, co-equal with the Father, the Pillar of Fire, the Protecting Cloud, the Eternal One, who was from the beginning, being throughout Roman Catholic countries symbolized as a little child on the arm of his mother, and being too often thought of as a child.

But whatever Voltaire said, it is very well known that he rejected the Church, and would not by any means listen to her ministration. But why should a child sicken at a story,

the most wonderful, romantic, touching, simple, beautiful, and full of the truest touches of genius in the world? A popular author, who often refers to it, as an unwavering believer, seldom does so without drawing tears,—sweet, humble, grateful tears. Voltaire himself more than once, like John Stuart Mill, drew a very flattering picture of the Saviour. His more learned disciple, Renan, is filled with admiration of the character. No man, indeed, can know all the panegyric which Christian bishops and philosophical doubters have lavished on the Divine character; and indeed, truly presented to man, it has in it all that man can love. The hatred to it can only arise from a mistake—a mistake the most serious in the world—and that is the terribly common, every-day error of teaching religion upon false pretences, and thrusting, as preachers often do, false views of goodness, false rewards, false tales and stories, upon the world, especially upon the world of the young.

This pious fraud seems to be inherent in humanity. Poor Humanity! it is as weak as a sick woman; and having, as it supposes, a bad bargain, seeks to make the best of it. “Pious frauds”—the gist of which is that it is legitimate to tell a lie to back up the truth—arose with the priests; but they are by no means confined to them. Here, step forward, honest William Hogarth, prime genius of England’s painters, perfect Englishman, sound Protestant, most honest good man as you are, and we know you are, and say how it

was you ever gave to the world that pious fraud of yours the industrious and idle apprentices. You knew well enough that the tares grow with the wheat till the harvest, and that an industrious man does but seldom become Lord Mayor, nor does the idle rogue always get sentenced to the gallows. A more sceptical and acute, though an infinitely less-gifted artist, did a series of badly drawn but cleverly conceived sketches, in which the idle cheat becomes Lord Mayor, and the industrious, honest boy is reduced to the workhouse. One is just as true as the other. "Goodness and greatness are not means, but ends." If you are good and great upon fifty pounds a year—and you may be very good and very great and just so poor—you have your reward ; you do not want to be made Lord Mayor, or alderman, or a baronet, or anything else. So again in these pious tales, in which you hear of little children writing letters to Jesus Christ, and of good men being rewarded with roast legs of mutton, what are they but false pretences? They are not a whit better than Alban Butler's "Lives of the Saints," in which it is related that poor St. Rosalia, having given away her old shoes to a beggar, the Blessed Virgin Mary put her hand out of heaven and gave her a magnificently-jewelled pair! Let a child find out that fraud, and what faith will he have? So about punishment: Mrs. Stowe relates of a child, that he had a great temptation to swear, and he did so. Tom retired to a room and said the word "d——!" and felt

rather disappointed that the earth did not open, and that the Lord took no immediate notice of his sin. Perhaps Mrs. Stowe could not in fewer words have more acutely pointed out the origin of much of the scepticism of the world. This continual assertion that right is always might, and that goodness comes off with the largest share of the apple-pie, is as harmful as it is false. What is true of the world is perhaps this—that as a rule, although excellence in art and success in trade often accompany goodness, yet the best people are the worst paid, the most tried, and the least rewarded of all. Pope, lame as he sometimes was at a moral argument, has had skill enough to tell us why :—

“ But sometimes Virtue starves while Vice is fed.
 What then ? Is the reward of Virtue bread ?
 That Vice may merit, 'tis the price of toil,
 The knave deserves it if he tills the soil.
 What nothing earthly gives, nor can destroy,
 The soul's calm sunshine, and the heartfelt joy,
 Is Virtue's prize. A better would you fix ?
 Then give Humility a coach and six. . . .
 Vain, foolish man, will Heaven reward us there
 With the same trash mad mortals wish for here ?
 Go, like the Indian, in another life
 Expect thy dog, thy brother, and thy wife.”

This satire is strong enough to awaken even the most stupid ; and yet how many are there who devote themselves to a good life, with the immediate or ultimate expectation of an adequate reward—who embrace honesty, not

on account of its intrinsic goodness, but as a policy which pays !

There are numbers of people who habitually deceive children with promises of enjoyment and reward, which they know will never come, and thus sow seeds of doubt at the very earliest age. Robert Hall, who was one of those truthful persons who hated a lie, once reproved a young mother very severely, because in putting a little baby to bed, she put on her own nightcap, and lay down by it till it went to sleep. "Madam," said the eloquent preacher, "you are acting a lie, and teaching the child to lie." Yes, and when the child had lost its trust in that mother, it had learnt the miserable habit of doubting, which it would never get over. It was in vain that the mother pleaded that the child would not go to sleep. "That," said Hall, "is nonsense. Properly brought up, it must sleep. Make it know what you want; obedience is necessary on its part, but not a lie on yours."

Going on in life, we cheat ourselves over and over again with false pretences, as a drunkard who stops at a fourth public-house and treats resolution because he has manfully passed three others. A man runs into a lawsuit with his neighbour, or upsets a whole community about a foot-path right of way, or he gives himself airs at church or chapel, and fancies that he is only asserting his rights, and that it is proper pride. There are a dozen little ways in which little vices creep up our sleeves under false pretences, and we all

the time know them to be false, but affect to believe them to be true. Like the man who said he drank—

“Because I’m wet, because I’m dry,
Or any other reason why,”

we have always an excuse for a neglected duty. “By the way, why were you not at such and such a meeting?” asks one. “These roughs have cut down the workhouse tea, bread, butter, and meat; and if you and two or three others had been there——” Well, we know the excuse. Does not every Englishman abuse the jury system because of stupid juries, but does not every man jack of us try to escape service? How many times have we tried to punish bribery at elections!—and yet at every election there are hundreds of hands held out for the bribe. And what false pretences are given both for giving and taking the money,—from five pounds for a pair of baby’s shoes, to a fee of fifty pounds to a doctor for attending a patient who is not sick; from buying a canary bird to giving away a steam-yacht! There are a thousand ways of bribery, which our provincial brethren laugh at. Some men get so used to this, that they think they are doing a noble action in cajoling a man out of his vote. “Oh, do let me go and canvass for you!” said a young lady to a candidate. “It is such fun, and I can tell such lots of fibs!” “There is nothing like lying,” said Mr. Fagg in the comedy; “but a good lie needs to be supported.

Whenever I draw a bill with one lie, I take care to endorse it with another."

As for false pretences in life, they are innumerable. How many very respectable families take in, let us say, the *Saintly Sanctum*, not because they read the work, but because it looks so well on the table! How many people go to church or chapel simply because it is highly respectable! "My dear," said a wife to her husband, "I never saw such a man as you are, playing with the children, and walking so fast! People will never think that we have been to church!"—"That let the cat out of the bag," cried the husband. "Well, and what is the use of going to church if we don't have the credit for it?" is the retort. "What will the world say?" is the thought which makes people dress in one way, wear ugly hats, chignons, live in expensive houses, worry themselves about other people, and, in short, indulge in false pretences.

Between lovers and friends these abound. A likes B, and walks and talks with him. Umph! does he really like B, or does he fancy that B likes him? or are they both useful to each other? Some people are very fast friends because they meet to talk to each other about themselves. They call this unburthening their minds. They delight in abusing all the world, with a secret reservation of their two dear selves. The very bond of friendship is the thinking the same and feeling the same. At school two little chaps

will get a thrashing together, and while feeling their bumps and drying their eyes, a reciprocity of feeling will spring up. Little Benjy Jones takes to little Tommy Smith, because Jones is the dullest boy in the class except Smith: there is a community of feeling, and the two little fellows persuade themselves that it is friendship; but let Smith get on in the school—and very dull boys rise sometimes—and Jones's heart is stung with jealousy, and the friendship ends.

As for love, that is a sacred name, a reality, in spite of prosaic days; a necessity, notwithstanding the thirst for gold; a holy thing, in spite of incredulity, want of nobility, and the folly of a thousand burlesques; and yet how much of it arises from mere false pretence! “Two young fools,” says Dr. Johnson, “are shut up in a room together, and told that they are to marry, and fancy that they are in love.” That is when young people marry to order of parents; but in ordinary cases, the beginning of love is one of the silliest and least logical of a man or woman's actions. J looks at E while at church; and E says, “What could he mean by looking at me?” E stares at J in some alarm; and J says to his friend, or to himself, “By Jove! that girl looked as if she were interested in me,” and looks back again. So the entanglement begins. Shakspeare, who knew the passion thoroughly, as he knew all the human heart, explains all this in a charming song, of which the miserable misuse of words and drifting of meaning have made the commonalty

lose the sense. Will not five out of ten of our readers be rather surprised to find that Fancy in this song means Love?

“Tell me where is Fancy bred,
Or in the heart, or in the head?
How begot, how nourished?

It is engender'd in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and Fancy dies
In the cradle where it lies:
Let us all ring Fancy's knell;
I'll begin it,—Ding, dong, bell.”

Any one who has heard this song properly harmonized, and sung by men, will say at once that it is the perfection of lyrical beauty; but more than that, it is the perfection of philosophy; it is truth. Love (fancy) between man and woman begins in the eye, and dies there, where it *lies*—observe the pun—directly it is false, or rather directly its falseness is discovered. After that, you may ring Love's knell. But in the meantime J is quite taken in with E. Like Benedick, he believes the girl loves him; and he cries, “Love me! why it must be requited!” and he returns the fondness. When married people begin to compare notes, they frequently quarrel as to who fell in love first; and each often dies in the belief that it was not entered into on the other side. If begun so loosely, can we wonder that marriages are so often unhappy? The great wonder is that loyalty and affection can really base them-

selves upon such slender foundations, and grow up straight and true, as they do in a thousand English homes. But the result is corrected only for those who are true. There are others who believe deceit to be the natural language of love. "All is fair in love, war, and politics," is the silly old cry ; as if we could banish honesty from anything without hurt to ourselves ! Simple honest truth, however, is better than all the false pretences in the world. The man in Germany who has made a fortune by forging Bass's labels, and selling Lagerbier for English pale ale, and the thief who marks French cutlery with Sheffield trade marks, may grow rich ; but the riches are but Dead Sea fruit, and will turn to dust and ashes. But these are open sins : the most difficult to be guarded against lie within our own hearts. How often do we deceive ourselves ! How often do we gild over a fault with a noble motive ! How often do we call rashness bravery, impudence boldness, folly the levity of youth, respectable hypocrisy genuine piety ! How many times in the week do we check ourselves in our progress towards the Better Self ! How often, in fact, are we all the victims of False Pretences !

XXVII.

P E A C E .

It is what we each strive for. It is the end all have in view. It is what every conqueror goes to war for ; what we all quarrel and fight for ; the sum of our ambition ; the answer to our prayers. If we cannot get it mentally we at least desire it bodily.

A physician wrote, now some years ago, to the *Times*, pleading with great force for quiet in London streets. According to him, we are sending dozens of people every year to the lunatic asylum through our noises and racketing tumult. There is no time to sleep. The broughams and cabs which convey the pleasure seekers from the theatre and the evening party keep up the noise till about three in the morning,—

“ Home from the ball flash jaded beauty’s wheels ; ”

and at that time the market carts begin to pour in ; and then post carts, early dust and mud carts, take up the noise ; till at six the cabs begin to stir, rattling away with

enthusiastic excursionists and busy bagmen to the early train, while from the train itself the piercing whistle is heard, and the snort and grumble of the distant engine re-echoes in the streets and squares.

Next we have the watercresses, the milk sellers, and other early industries, some eccentric street tradesmen and women shrieking out "'ilk," or "'meat," with a sudden burst, as a poor man complained, as if a penknife had been thrust into their backs and had forced out the ejaculation. After that there is no peace. In summer the water carts, at all times long strings of empty or full carts and waggons, calculated with immense ingenuity to make as much noise as they possibly can upon newly macadamized roads, which the parish will not roll smooth, rumble up and down at a jog trot, the drivers standing up and yelling out a rude song or crashing their whips like pistol shots. Next come the boys with iron hoops, and when they see a little dog or an old lady they raise a wild Indian scream which shatters the nerves to pieces. There is really no peace for Londoners. As for the invalids, writes the physician, "it is simple murder with them." And there is no doubt that he is right. Humanity is a poor thing. It requires sleep to arrest its decay, "sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care," and modern civilization, in this detestably selfish, weak and grovelling age, will not let it have it.

It is not only in London, but in all country towns that

this game is played. A judge, whom we all respect—for happily our judges have achieved that reputation that the very culprits themselves have the greatest confidence in them—lately complained that he could not hear the witnesses nor calmly reflect upon the case, because of the continual shrieking of a railway engine, and that he and the bar were suffering from a sleepless night from the same cause. But what did that matter to the railway company? If A, B, and C form themselves into a company, and get a Bill through Parliament, have they not a right to bully, ruin, and disturb the peace of all the rest of the alphabet? It really seems so now.

This question of the peace and quiet of all classes is a most important one. We are, by depriving rich and poor of it, shortening human life, weakening human efforts, and destroying human reason; for a man does not live long, nor happily, nor wisely, if he is in a state of war. It is neither good for nations nor for men as individuals. There was a wise King of England, who has, perhaps more than any other monarch, a double reputation. In the one he is known as Shakspeare's Harry of Richmond, a resolute, energetic, and brave hero, who brought happiness to England by slaying Richard III. In history he is known as a politic, saving, somewhat mean monarch, Henry VII. But no one doubts his wisdom; and his prayer for the body-politic was always for peace. Like

Lord Falkland, he had always the words "peace!" "peace!" upon his lips; and it is said never commenced a treaty without the words, "When Christ came into the world peace was sung, and when he left it peace was bequeathed."

But we must remember to whom it was bequeathed; that it was only given to men of gentle will. Beyond this the very goodness and peace of some is a motive to others for aggression. "I am for peace," said David prophetically: "but when I speak, they make them ready for war." A calm, wise man is often mistaken for a coward; and the very way to provoke an insult from some base natures is to be as quiet and peaceful as you can. It does not speak very well either for European or American politicians to note that the peaceful policy of Great Britain, the only really great Power in the world which embodies peace in its political programme, has been construed into a sign of weakness and decline.

Peace of body is of course true health, which the wisdom of the world, of ancient and modern sages, has pronounced the greatest of all blessings. In fact there is nothing like it. No amount of riches can console one for the want of health. It may be thrown away in the pursuit of money; but millions of money cannot buy it. To attempt to compare money to health is simply folly,—the things are not in the same parallel, not upon the

same platform. As to genius, beauty, or power, they will not stand the comparison. What can? All these—birth, power, beauty, position, youth, all that man covets—are subsidiary to health. They are very nice, very pleasant, very delightful *with* it; but they are nothing without it. And the more we know of anatomy and physiology, and the thousand chords, nerves, arteries, and bones of this wonderful house we live in, the more we wonder at having on the whole so little the matter with us. Some of our great modern philosophers have demonstrated, in an irrefragable way, that Infinite Wisdom should have made us perfect, and that this structure of ours should not decay, nor grow weary, nor be diseased, nor do anything which it ought not to do. Before the fall of man, man was doubtless perfect; but when death and disease, and the great enemy of peace, sin, came into the world, *that* blessed state gave place to one in which pain and sickness were to be great teachers, and to serve their turn. And now, when we are made so strong and beautiful, we can only wonder why we are not made blinder, weaker, and smaller. If we marvel at our ill health, we also wonder at our wondrously constructed bodies, and cry—

“Strange that a harp of thousand strings
Should keep in tune so long ! ”

We all desire this peace of body, and almost all of us can command it, presuming we are not of those whose trials

commence before they are born, and who carry in their bodies the conquering ensign of hereditary death, and the stigma of some incurable disease. To such, the entire health and peace of the body is never known ; that blessed state which almost all the young have ; in which the noble animal called man is utterly unconscious of having nerves, teeth, a tongue, a heart, a head, a stomach, a throat, a backbone, feet, hands, or indeed anything but a stomach, of which he or she is pleasantly reminded by a strong appetite, the satisfaction of which three times a day at least, is a pure and undiminished pleasure. Those are the days—those the rosy hours of life.

“ Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very Heaven.”

That is what we call peace of body—true peace. When a man knows that he has a head upon his shoulders, by rack-ing thoughts, which make it ache, and a heart, by the remorse which tears it, the unrequited love which wounds it, and the sorrow which makes it quiver and rebound, he has lost that health. When his stomach refuses to give him appetite or nourishment, his feet wander and grow feeble, and “his bones are smitten with a sore disease,” so that he “could roar from the very disquietude of his heart,” his peace has fled for ever.

But a man often has the power to keep well, if he likes ; and a life of useful work and temperate living brings on an

old age like a mild and good Winter, "frosty but kindly." Old Adam, in "As You Like It," the only part, except the Ghost in "Hamlet," in which Shakspeare ever played, has a capital recipe—for peace of body, at least—

"Though I look old, yet I am strong and lusty :
For in my youth I never did apply
Hot and rebellious liquors in my blood,
Nor did not with unbashful forehead woo
The means of weakness and debility ;
Therefore my age is as a lusty winter,
Frosty, but kindly."

It is pleasant to know that the portrait of sweet Will, to which Ben Jonson has written such a strong attestation as to its excellent likeness, is said to have been taken in the antique costume of the part wherein he delivers so wise a lecture to young men.

"Peace I give unto you," relates to the peace of mind which the great Physician of our souls knew was of more importance than the other. Its motto might be, "Without Me, nothing;" for, indeed, its absence ruins everything; and that, too, is very easy of acquirement, while it is the most seldom acquired of all. The envious, restless, active man, does not get it. He who wants faith in God or in man must be without it; he who is covetous and envious must, perforce, go without it; he who loves gold, power, greeting, friends, and all the good things in the world, must often miss it. He wants more than he can get; and want

is, perforce, his master. He who plots against the peace of others, and lays mines to blow into the air the fortunes of his rival, loses it; he who gives himself over to any folly or sin must go without it; for although the sin may be pleasant for a time, hereafter it will reproach him; and in the dead of the night, when the rain is on the roof, and the south wind sighs round the corners of the house like a wailing ghost, and the long shadows cast by the night light tremble and flicker, the poor man will know what he has lost. Poor man! why should we say so? We naturally hate these disturbers of human peace—those who rob the orphan, and devour widows' houses; those who sweep the poor man's gains into their pockets, and trouble all good men with their ungodly greed. There are some pious souls who insist that part of the happiness of the good will be the eternal contemplation of the destruction and punishment of sin, and that wickedness will be perpetually reminded of its miserable folly by a perpetual state of misery and an utter want of peace.

We go not so far with them, but we certainly pity not the wicked when they get pinched in this world. When the rogue has a rope round his neck, and the rascal yells out at the whipping post, we have no maundering pity for them. They had a thousand warnings before they got so far as that; they occasioned tears and groans enough; they gave pain enough from the time when they disobeyed their

father, mother, pastors, and masters, to the days when they broke a poor woman's jaw with an iron chisel for the sake of a few coins, or disabled a child for life for the gratification of a lower passion. Pray Heaven for these silly men that their punishment comes in this world. Let us ask that conscience may waken and haunt them as they lie at home or walk abroad, that they may never know sweet peace of mind, that they may toss restlessly upon their couch, and that every ill-gotten fruit may turn to dust and ashes in their mouths. Let us pray for this.

But indeed we need not. Good supplications are answered before they are made ; all that any good man can pray for is the will of God, and that we know is against the wicked and on the side of the good. To the latter he gives peace of mind ; the former has none of it, and is ill at ease. He is the man who flieth when no one pursueth, and who suspects everybody to be a rogue because he knows that he himself is one. He it is who never gets any satisfaction out of anything ; to whom all is barren, and for whom every fruit is tasteless, and every pleasure vapid, idle, and worthless. He may call in the doctor ; but he is of no use, for who indeed " can minister to a mind diseased ? "

" Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow ;
Raze out the written troubles of the brain ;
And, with some sweet oblivious antidote,
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
That weighs upon the heart."

Shakspeare is, as usual, true in everything. The grief of guilt does indeed prey upon the heart ; and some terrible criminals who have battled long with life and fought hard with the devil, have died of degeneration of the heart. The walls of that muscular organ have grown so thin that the finger of a child could pierce them, or the blood thrown back upon it by the turmoil of the brain has ruptured it, so that the man has died. He that plays with the devil need be cunning indeed. At best he spends a few years in gilded misery, and knows not even then how bad a bargain he has made.

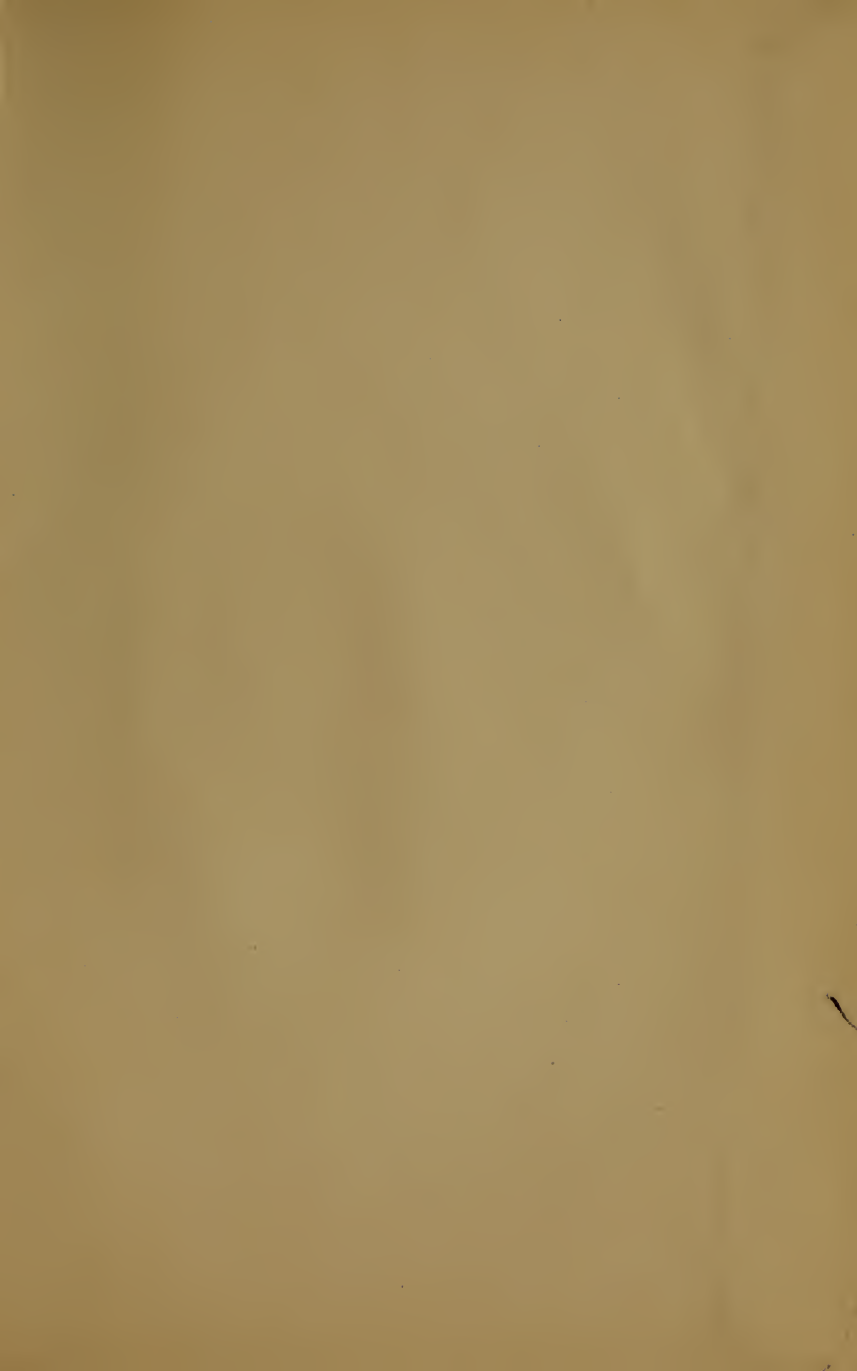
But the good, conscientious, honest man, cannot well be without peace. Seasons may go wrong, and the world be disturbed, as it is at present, but having done his best, he awaits the turn of the tide. He alone is happy when others are fleeing away over half the earth to dissipate their thoughts. He enjoys the landscape from his cottage door, or the view of the housetops from his back parlour window. Says jog-trot Shenstone :—

“ Would you taste the tranquil scene,
Be sure your bosoms are serene :
Devoid of hate, devoid of strife,
Devoid of all that poisons life :
And much it ’vails you in their place
To graft the love of human race.”

Well, you may find it difficult to do that, remembering what the human race is ; but you can cultivate the true four-

leaved shamrock—fear of God, faith, hope, and charity—and you will find even that. The human race has become so silly and changeable of late, so fond of innovation, so ready for pictured finery, bran new politics, tinselled and illustrated worship, and so ready to abandon the safe old ways for that which is a mere novelty, that it finds not favour with good men, and is hardly the ground whereon to cultivate true peace of mind. For the chief source of that, we all look somewhat higher ;—far above the tree-tops and the mountains and the high-sailing clouds—far above earth—even to Heaven itself.

THE END.



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